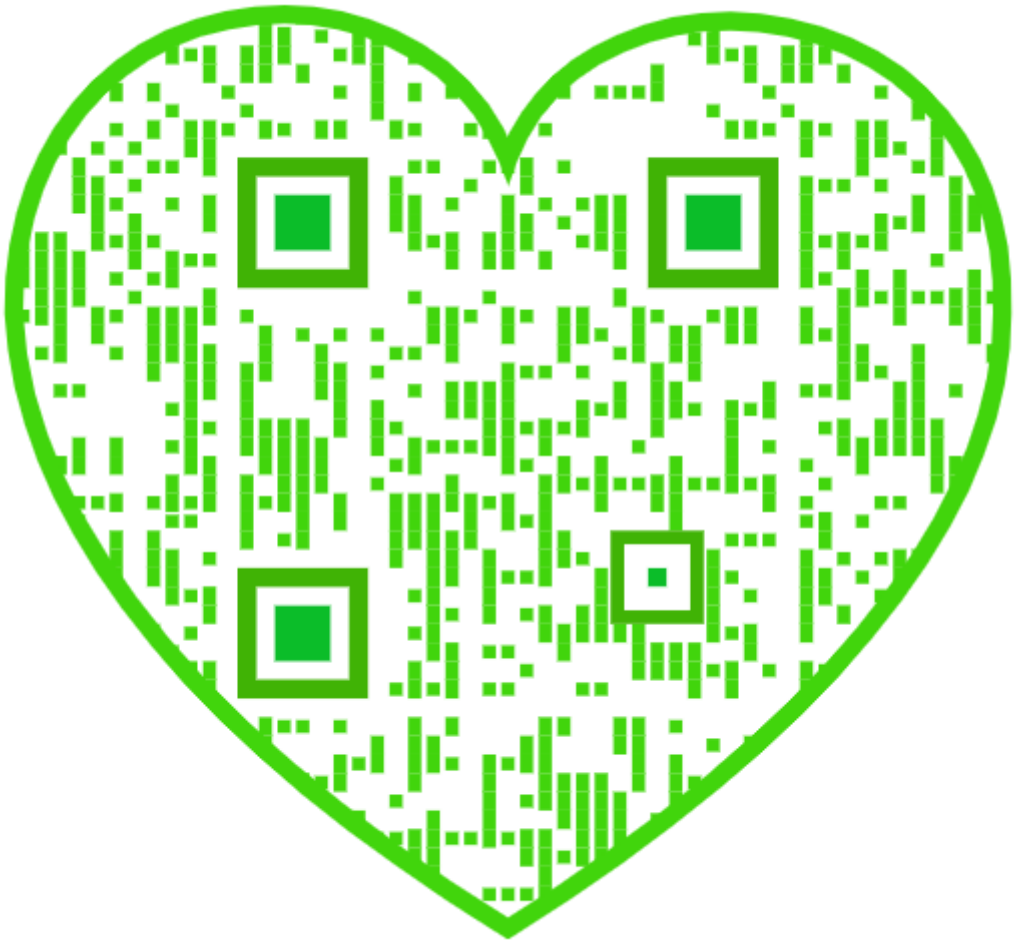

236

THE

Touchstone of Character:

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

OF THE

Frédéric Edouard Chassay.

ABBÉ FREDERICK EDWARD CHASSAY,

Professor of Philosophy in the Seminary of Bayeux, Member of the Academy of the Catholic Religion at Rome, &c. &c.

"EXISTER C'EST COMBATTRE."

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, CITY OF WASHINGTON.

NEW YORK:
M. T. COZ[illegible]
556 BROADWAY.

MDCCCLIII.

C

BJ1522
.C5

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1853, by

M. T. COZANS,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, for the Southern District of New York.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

PAGE

Approbation, ... 7

Note by the American Editor, ... 9

Authors Preface, ... 13

Introduction, ... 17

Chapter I.—The Heart and Virtue, ... 31

" II.—Melancholy, ... 62

" III.—Anarchy of the Heart, ... 93

" IV.—Sensuality at the Tribunal of the Passions, ... 122

" V.—Servitude and Liberty, ... 141

" VI.—Sensuality in the family, ... 161

" VII.—The Family Regenerated, ... 185

" VIII.—The Rationalistic Marriage, ... 201

" IX.—Marriage and Liberty, ... 220

" X.—Marriage and Love 239

APPROBATION

OF

MONSEIGNEUR, THE BISHOP OF BAYEUX.

I have read, with the greatest interest, this work of the Abbé Chassay. This book, written with the perspicuity, elegance and energy which characterize the style of its learned author, appears to me, by irrefragable proofs, to demonstrate, that true happiness can only be found in pure hearts, formed according to the precepts, and upon the laws of christianity.

May it be diffused among all classes of society, and produce the happy effects intended by its pious author.

† L. F., Bishop of Bayeux.

NOTE BY THE

AMERICAN EDITOR.

The author of this elegant volume first became known to the American Editor by some of his brilliant essays in the Paris *Annales de Philosophie Chretienne*, and by his profound refutation of German and French Rationalism in a work entitled *Christ et l'Evangile.* That so profound and gifted a writer should take in hand a series of volumes with the title of a *Library of a Christian Woman*, at first excited surprise. What attraction could the metaphysician, who had wrestled successfully with Strauss and his followers, find, for the style of writing, that usage has consecrated to the address of woman? As soon as we open any of these volumes we ascertain the secret. M. Chassay is not a dreamy metaphysician, nor a man of merely theoretic study. He understands, he feels the wounds of modern society; and the value of his philosophy is, that it appreciates at once the malady and the method of cure. How well he under-

stands the results of that sensual literature of George Sands and Eugene Sue, which has deluged France these years past! How accurately he tells what the results must be! It is not a little remarkable that the first edition of this present volume was published in Paris on the morning of February 22nd, 1848, the very day of the revolution that drove Louis Philippe from the throne, and witnessed the downfall of the regime that sought to sustain good order in society without the aid of religion.

The charm of M. Chassay's books is, that while they breathe throughout the severe and never changing principles of the doctrines of the Gospel, they are yet eminently books of our day. They discuss the principles of authors and of romances that are met with in every neighbourhood, and which, alas! find persons of unimpeached reputations to make their apologies, if not to advocate their perusal. This work of the Abbé Chassay's, as some one has said, is at once a triumphant vindication of christian morals against the literature of sensualism, and a volume of pious and excellent meditations, not perhaps for girls, but for women of the world, and of society; and an instructive volume for men of study, for priests, for the learned, and also for young men who have been read in the literature of which it is so admirable a condemnation. "When I took up this book," wrote the illustrious Bishop Parisis, "I expected to find in it matter of pious edification, but I did not anticipate, at

the same time, such a volume of high philosophy, and of learned controversy. So charmed was I with it, that I read it almost through without laying it aside for a moment, and I wish it may be read by all thinking people, so great is the light it sheds on the most important and most attacked moral questions."

The translation of this volume has been the work of a gifted lady, who will not permit her name to be mentioned in connection with it. The abridging and omitting some of the notes, and the incorporation of others of them into the body of the work, has been the ungrateful task of the editor. But it was judged necessary to do so, in order not, too much, to break up the volume by the profusion of references.

If this volume meets the acceptance with the public which it deserves, it will be followed up by translations of the succeeding works of the series: such as the Manual of a Christian Woman; Christian woman in her relations with the world; Prejudices and distractions of the world; Duties of Women in Married Life; Duties of Mothers from the Catholic point of view; Martha and Mary, or the Education of Girls, &c., &c.

J. A. McM.

New York, Jan. 16, 1853

THE ABBÉ CHASSAY'S

PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

No one appreciates more fully than we do, the books of devotion composed by the theologians of the last two centuries. Many of these works exhibit a solid science, an enlightened piety, and an ardent zeal for the salvation of souls. But it is equally incontestable that these books, (we speak of the greater number) written in a severe and exclusively theological style, are no longer in harmony with the intellectual requirements and literary habits of those who live in the midst of the world. Long since we formed the project of a library, which might present, clothed in the language of our own age, a collection of those truths which should conduct souls progressively, even to the sublime heights of evangelical perfection,—a perfection intended as the Saviour teaches for all christians, and for all conditions in life.

The success of this work, of which the first edition appeared amid the convulsions of 1848, as well as the favor with which the *Manual of a Christian Woman* has since been received, proves that the religious public has appreciated the utility of the plan, the realization of which we have purposed, in accordance with the measures of our feeble powers.

If we are able to execute our idea in its whole extent, we will, perhaps, publish, at some future period, books of devotion for the use of men of the world; but as works of this kind, when addressed to all, do not necessarily suit any individual, on account of the generality of the counsels which they contain; we design these first publications for christian women, who desire to preserve, nothwithstanding the agitations of the age, the inestimable treasure of the virtues inculcated by the Gospel.

Before tracing, in our *Manual of a Christian Woman*, a sketch of these virtues, we must first seek to dissipate the prejudices which now serve to alienate many minds from the doctrine of evangelical purity. We must discover whether woman can listen to those new apostles, who would teach her the worship of pleasure in place of the religion of devotion. As these ideas have already seduced many understandings, thanks to romances, essays, and above all, to periodical literature. We have not thought it advisable to approach the study of the Gospel before having shown our

sisters that the teachings of the sacred book can alone preserve their moral dignity, and their true influence in the world; that christianity is not for them a law of slavery, but the true cause of their holiest virtues, and that they are indebted to it for the large share they have taken in the development of modern society. We must, in order to make them more freely understand the duties imposed upon them by the Gospel, attempt to dissipate the prejudices they may have acquired during their frequent relations with a world which has long ceased to recognize the word of our Saviour Jesus Christ, as the rule of its judgments.

We have desired to show, to all sincere souls, the danger of those opinions which were formerly received with universal indulgence—an indulgence which contained, in our opinion, the germ of frightful calamity. Our anticipations have been but too fully realized by events; and this book, of which the basis was already written in 1844, and which was printed before the breaking out of the last revolution, has seemed prophetic, because of the menaces addressed by it to a society grown drowsy in the lap of ease and luxury. Now that the doctrine of pleasure attacks the family, religion, property, in a word, all the basis of society, no longer in the secret of the clubs, but in the full blaze of day, illusons are henceforth impossible. Facts have proved the infallibility of that christian doctrine, which the sons of Voltaire so often treated as folly, during the latter years of the

reign of Louis Philippe. We shall no longer be accused of exaggeration, in having shown to those infatuated souls who were sleeping upon the brink of the abyss, the swords ready drawn, and the poignards glittering amid the gloom.

We have suppressed none of these warnings, for, can we believe that society is sincerely converted, and that the harsh lessons of the two past years have been profitable to all the disciples of the religion of pleasure? But, as now, the wound is open, and bleeds visibly to all eyes. We have thonght it advisable to suppress some of the proofs (1) and citations which paint, in too vivid a manner, perhaps, for some imaginations, the disorders we would condemn. We have, however, only made such retrenchments as were compatible with the nature and object of this work.

Sommervieu, France, Nov. 19, 1849,

Festival of St. Elizabeth of Hungary.

INTRODUCTION.

O YE INCREDULOUS, THE MOST CREDULOUS.—(*Pascal.*)

No one, in my opinion, should be astonished if our adversaries and ourselves arrive at conclusions entirely contradictory, when the question concerns the conduct of life. We have, in fact, starting points so opposite that it is not surprising our results should be completely different whenever we treat of morals or of social order. What is, in fact, the logical chain of ideas of those who contradict with the greatest apparent ingenuity the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel?

The school of Voltaire, by ridiculing cleverly both mind and heart, and understanding and love, had for ever driven far from it all sensitive and generous souls. (1) Rousseau, who understood so well the moral grandeur of Christianity, (2) was never willing to accept a derisory and mocking scepticism, which destroyed at once reason and sensibility. He did not, however, wish to receive that

severe Christian morality which restrains so firmly all the impulses of the heart, and which aims at governing humanity through order and law. To break entirely with the doctrines of the Gospel, he was obliged to choose a totally different starting point. In studying even superficially the inclinations of man, Rousseau could not deny many disorderly instincts; (3) but, by an illusion, which vanishes in the presence of facts, he attributed all weaknesses and all frailties to the habits of a corrupting civilisation; (4) nay, he even went so far as to say that human nature, freed from social prejudices, was the universal rule of the beautiful, the true, and the good. (5) Thus, purify your soul from the evil influences that the world has planted therein; seek no longer in the books of men a fluctuating and uncertain science; look not towards the Heavens for the star which is to guide you in the path of life. Heaven is silent, and the God who, spurning the world with His foot, launched it into space, will never descend to speak with you. (6)

However, do not permit yourself to despair, nor to be seduced by the vain sophisms of a discouraging philosophy! Has not God given you an interior light, which may shine upon all the actions of life? Have you not a heart, sensitive and strong? Ah! leave far behind the vain ideas of men, their narrow

prejudices, and their criminal compromises! Return to the feelings of human nature, so upright, so pure, and so fertile! You will find in yourselves an inexhaustible source of greatness and love, which will fill your existence with energy and light. Man, such as society has made him, is only an incomplete and suffering being, who has been wrapped from his cradle in bands which stifle and depress him. The effort has been to suppress in him all the natural impulses capable of rendering him great and strong. He has been imprisoned in those bands of iron, called the position, compromises, and laws of society. Rapidly has he been transformed into a mean and miserable being, incapable of great sacrifices or of noble self-devotion. But man, such as he came from the hand of God, was never made for this base slavery. He has no cause to blush for his nature. He feels within himself an urgent necessity for loving; this necessity forms his happiness, and makes his life. He will love the soft azure of the skies, he will love the modest flowers of the field, he will love all nature, ere a stronger and more elevated love blooms within his heart. Let him grow up in this love and sympathy which are to fill his existence; here he will find patience, activity, compassion, perfect virtue. A heart which has not been stifled bears within it all the germs of the beautiful,

all the seeds of the good. God, who made man for his own happiness, takes pleasure in seeing him develope himself, unfettered by human tyranny, full of love for nature and for humanity. Every law which would reduce him to a different mode of life is bad, because it is impossible. The law cannot accuse man of frailty and corruption, but it must reproach itself with having mistaken the requirements of humanity. (7)

If in the theory of the Genevan philosopher there is something seducing for young minds, which are still governed by the senses and the imagination, it will never bear the reflection of a riper age, and it will always be shattered by a more serious examination of human nature, considered in its profound misery, in its sad reality. To me it is very evident that the specious utopia which has been opposed to our Christian ideas is an entirely ideal system, completely denuded of all historical or psychological basis, a veritable romance of the heart, as much as the *Nouvelle Heloïse* or *Clarissa Harlowe*. The basis upon which it rests is in contradiction with the clearest and most positive facts of human nature.

Human nature is certainly a great mystery ; however, it is impossible to establish any point in morals before having solved the formidable problem of the origin and destiny of man. The system of our ad-

versaries rests upon an hypothesis so evidently debateable that it seems to us necessary before going further, to examine rapidly the fundamental axiom of their whole theory. The rationalists, disdaining facts and history, build their fantastic palaces in the air, vain dreams of an excitable imagination. But the City of God, which preserves eternally light and life, has laid its foundations upon the rock and upon the everlasting mountains. Catholic dogmas are connected with the universal convictions and with the most ancient and venerable traditions of the human race. To break with Catholicity is to break with the most authentic history of the past. It is this which attaches to Catholic ideas all those minds that prefer good sense to systems, and positive facts to the vain speculations of a chimerical rationalism. The doctrine of the Church is an admirable tradition, which commences with time and ends with eternity.

These principles once well understood, no one should be surprised that we make an immediate appeal to history, convinced, as we are, that the pretensions of our adversaries can never be sustained upon the fair field of facts. If then we invoke science in the question which is now before us, we shall find at the beginning of the religious traditions of all the most ancient nations, this opinion, namely,

that human nature, primitively pure and holy, by a fatal revolt against the Author of life, fell from its first greatness, and received a deep wound. (8) Voltaire himself, so seldom in harmony with our opinions, could not avoid saying that "Original sin is the foundation of the theology of all nations."(9) Kant makes the same avowal: "Men," says he, "have asserted with a common consent that the world commenced with good, but that the fall into evil soon became manifest." (10)

The limits of this introduction will not permit me to cite universal traditions in proof of the primeval fall. I have accomplished that work elsewhere in its whole extent. I will here confine myself simply to a few fundamental reflections, in order to render clear the rigorous logic of Christian ideas in their relations to the subject which now occupies us.

If man be essentially pure and good, as some have dreamed, whence comes it that the human race, especially considered in its early history, sees only in him a criminal stricken by Divine justice? Is not humanity for the whole world that mysterious Prometheus, chained to the rock by justice and power for having attempted to steal fire from Heaven? Does not all mankind unite in believing that human nature, to use Cicero's admirable expression, is but *a soul in ruins*?

The most ancient histories represent, under graceful and poetical emblems, a certain period truly happy, when the heart of man had not yet felt the influence of evil, when his spirit retained without difficulty celestial truths. But, say the primitive historians, on one eventful day the golden chain that bound earth to Heaven was fatally broken, and human nature fell into all its depths of misery. One must be singularly inattentive not to perceive the persevering care with which humanity has preserved this tradition, so expressive of the first degradation. Whence are these strange rites, destined to purify the marriage union, which should seem rather to suggest ideas less dark and severe? Why is the birth of the child accompanied by ceremonies, which so well express the energetic desire of expiation, which tormented all the ancient people? In Rome, in Mexico, in Egypt, in Thibet, in Persia, in India, in Greece, in the Canaries, have we not seen the new-born purified by a mysterious water, and even sometimes by fire, to efface the stain of his birth? I am no longer surprised that Virgil places at the entrance to the kingdoms of sorrow, children harvested at the breast, before they have tasted of life.

Another practice not less universal, perhaps not less strange, again expresses the conviction held by the human race of its fall, and of its profound

misery. Turn your eyes in every direction, and you will find the thought of appeasing a Heaven believed to be angry, and the practice of sacrifice as widely spread as the belief in a God. Who then are you, ye men of these latter ages, who tell us of those innate virtues which the sons of Adam never recognised as privileges granted to them? Five or six centuries before all philosophy, David exclaimed: "For behold I was conceived in iniquities, and in sins did my mother conceive me." Several centuries before David, Job said, when addressing himself to God: "Who can make him clean that is conceived of unclean seed?"

It is easy to perceive how strong is the chain which binds together all the dogmatic and historical ideas presented by the human race. Man believes himself stricken by the hand of Heaven; he inscribes this dogma at the head of all theologies; he recalls it in a thousand solemn circumstances, at the birth of children, at the marriage of the betrothed, and when offering sacrifice to his divinities; but what completes on this point the proof of the absolute identity of universal tradition with our Christian convictions, is that all these regrets, all these expiations tend to some vast hope, which increases day by day. According to the Pythagorean Philolaus, all the ancient theologians and poets stated that the

soul was buried in the body as in a tomb, for the punishment for some sin. (11) He might have added that, from the depths of this tomb men raised their hands to Heaven, and sighed after the DESIRED OF THE NATIONS; after Him, who alone could kindle in them the true light and stainless purity. (12)

I ask you, can any serious reason be found for rejecting the ancient belief of the human race with regard to our origin and our nature? I cannot find that truly scientific labors furnish the least objection against the doctrine of which we now speak, which can long detain us. On the contrary, it appears to me that the more recent inquiries into the religions and worship of the East, have placed the universality of the convictions of the nations in a still stronger light. If, on the other hand, we consider the question from the point of view of experimental philosophy, psychological labors will singularly support the opinions which tradition imposes upon us. Let us hear upon this subject the most profound thinkers:—

"Who does not know, says St. Augustin, in what ignorance of the truth, as is plainly shown in children, and with how many bad passions, which make their appearance even in infancy, as from a germ which all the sons of Adam bear within them from their birth, man comes into the world; so that, were

he permitted to live according to his own fancy, there is scarcely an excess of which he would not be guilty. Law and instruction keep watch against the darkness and inordinate desires in which we are born. But that cannot be effected without much pain and grief. Wherefore, I ask you, the threats made to children to keep them in the path of duty? Wherefore the masters, the governors, the rods, the scourges which must so often be employed in the education of a beloved child, lest he should become incorrigible and ungovernable? Wherefore all these sufferings, if not to conquer ignorance, and to repress lust, two evils which accompany us at our entrance into the world? Whence comes the difficulty of remembering anything, and the ease with which it is again forgotten? The labor requisite to acquire knowledge, and the facility of ignorance. Why is diligence so painful, and sloth so easy? Does not all this clearly show the real tendency of nature, and the assistance she requires to aid her in her weakness?" (13)

"Ye are deceived, ye sages of our age! exclaims Bossuet; man is not the delight of nature, since she outrages him in so many ways; neither can he be her outcast, since he has within him that which is of more value than nature herself. Whence comes then so strange a disproportion? and why do we find the parts so disconnected? Must it be told?

Do not these disjointed fragments, with their magnificent foundations, plainly speak of a creation in ruins? Contemplate this edifice, you will behold the traces of a Divine hand; but the inequality of the work will soon convince you of the share that sin has therein taken? My God! what is this medley? I scarcely recognise myself. Is this the man made in the image of God, the miracle of His wisdom, and the masterpiece of His workmanship? It is he, doubt it not. Whence then this discordance? It arises from the desire of man to build, according to his own ideas, upon the foundation of his Creator, and his having swerved from the original plan. Thus, contrary to the regularity of the first design, the immortal and the corruptible, the spiritual and the carnal, in a word, the angel and the animal, are found at once united. Behold the solution of the enigma, the explanation of the difficulty: Faith restores us to ourselves, and our shameful deficiencies can no longer hide from us our natural dignity."(14) This great Bishop says elsewhere, with admirable energy, in speaking of human nature:—"It is like the remains of an edifice, once regular and harmonious, now overthrown and lying upon the ground, but which still retains some vestiges of its ancient grandeur and of the science of its Architect." (15)

"In this abyss, says Pascal, does the Gordian

knot of our condition find its twistings and turnings; so that man is more incomprehensible without this mystery, than is this mystery incomprehensible to man."

Now that we have surveyed our adversaries' starting point, it remains for us to judge of their theory in its application to the requirements of the Individual, of the Family, and of Society.

NOTES AND PROOFS OF THE INTRODUCTION.

1 Romain Cornut, Essay on Voltaire. Andre, Development of Voltarianism, in the Annales de Philosophie Chretienne, 3d series, 17.

2 J. J. Rousseau, Oeuvres completes, Desoer's edition, V., 494, X., 211, IX., 124 and 130, XVIII., 559, and above all IV., 83, IX., 115.

3 J. J. Rousseau, Oeuvres completes, VIII., 423, XVIII., 45.

4 J. J. Rousseau, Essay on the Origin of Inequality.

5 "The books of men are false, says he; but nature never lies." We have shewn, in the first part of "Christ and the Gospel," to what lengths this principle had carried the Stoics.

6 J. J. Rousseau, Emile and Letters from the Mountain. For the refutation, see Hooke, Strictures on Emile. Bergier, Deism refuted.

7 The opinions we have just cited will not be found in Emile. Emile is a book of official philosophy. We have sought, in the Confessions, the real views and true opinions of the Genevan Philosopher. Did he not himself write at the beginning of this book, Intus et in cute?

8 We have established this fact by abundant proofs, in a review, when treating, in its whole extent, the question of the Primeval Fall. Universite Catholique, 2d series, V. We refer our readers to it.

9 Voltaire, Essai sur les moeurs, III., 295, edition of 1756.

10 Kant, of Religion within the limits of reason.

11 We have given no references for the greater part of the facts we have cited. They will be found in our articles on the Primeval Fall.

12 We have elsewhere established the universal expectation of the Redeemer. Le Christ et l'Evangile, 2d part, I vol.

13 St. Augustine, City of God.

14 Bossuet, Sermon on Death.

15 Bossuet, First Sermon for Pentecost. It is somewhat curious that the materialist Broussais has arrived at the same results by psychological observations. Broussais, De l'irritation et de la folie, 100. Every one is acquainted with the beautiful pages of M. de Lamenais on this question. De Lamenais, Essai sur l'indifference.

THE TOUCHSTONE OF CHARACTER.

CHAPTER I.

THE HEART AND VIRTUE.

HE WHO RENOUNCES SELF-CONTROL, DEVOTES HIMSELF, LIKE A MADMAN, TO THE GRAVEST MISFORTUNES.—(*Madame de Stael.*)

An impartial observer, who wishes to understand the whole of human nature, cannot base upon that shifting sand the law of duty and of imperishable truth. The ideas of the Gospel, full of sublime elevation, are the only true explanation of the great mystery of man. If I comprehend well the doctrine of the Saviour, there are, in our life, two powers and two laws. These two laws are expressed, with remarkable energy, by the profound antithesis of the *flesh*, and the *spirit*. Jesus Christ, when addressing Peter, who had confessed his divinity, said to him: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in Heaven."—St. Matt., xvi, 17. In the garden of olives, He awa-

kens His disciples to say to them these last and solemn words: "Watch ye, and pray that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."—Ibid, xxvi, 41. In St. John, they are called sons of God who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh.—St. John, i, 12, 13. Jesus Christ says to the Pharisees whom He condemns: "You judge according to the flesh." —St. John, viii, 15. The Apostles have faithfully reproduced this doctrine. The great Apostle wrote to the Romans: "We know that the law is spiritual but I am carnal."—Rom., vii, 14. In addressing the Corinthians, and speaking of the time when they were not truly Christians, he says to them: "And I, brethren, could not speak to you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal. As unto little ones in Christ."—1 Cor., iii, 1. Afterwards he adds: "For, whereas there is among you envying and contention, are you not carnal, and weak according to man?"—Ibid, iii, 3. He contrasts the wisdom of the flesh with the grace of God.—2 Cor., i, 12. "I myself, with the mind, serve the law of God; but with the flesh, the law of sin."—Rom., vii, 25. "There is now therefore no condemnation to them that are in Jesus Christ, who walk not according to the flesh."—Rom., viii, 1. "We walk not according to the flesh, but according to the

spirit; for they that are according to the flesh, mind the things that are of the flesh; but they that are according to the spirit, mind the things that are of the spirit. For the wisdom of the flesh is death; but the wisdom of the spirit is life and peace. Because the wisdom of the flesh is an enemy to God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither can it be. And they who are in the flesh, cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh, you shall die; but if by the spirit, you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live."—Rom., viii, 1–14. "Flesh and blood cannot possess the kingdom of God: neither shall corruption possess incorruption."—1 Cor., xv, 50. "For though we walk according to the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh."—2 Cor., x, 3. "I condescended not to flesh and blood."—Gal., 1, 16. "Walk in the spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh."—Ibid, v, 16. "For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh."—Ibid, 17. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are fornication, uncleanness, immodesty, luxury."—Ibid, 19. "And they that are Christ's, have crucified their flesh, with the vices

and concupisences."—Ibid, 24. "For what things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap. For he that soweth in his flesh, of the flesh also shall he reap corruption. But he that soweth in the spirit, of the spirit shall reap life everlasting."—Ibid, vi, 8. St. Peter says: "He reserves the unjust unto the day of judgment to be tormented. And especially them who walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness."—2 Peter, ii, 9, 10. "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, to refrain yourselves from fleshly desires which war against the soul."—1 Peter, ii, 11. St. Jude says to the Christians: "Hating also the spotted garment which is fleshly."—St. Jude, 23.

The heart, when it is delivered over to the laws of instinct unregenerated, becomes, so to speak, the centre and the organ of that vivid and strong carnal power, which combats ever against the spirit. "From the heart," says Christ, "come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false testimonies, blasphemies."—St. Matt., xv, 19. Bourdaloue also, speaks of the *rebellion of the heart*.—(BOURDALOUE, *Sermon on the Purification of the Virgin.)* J. J. Rousseau himself, wrote to the physician Tronchin, the following words, which overthrow his whole sentimental system, and which seem a commentary on the text from the Gos-

pel: "There is no man, who would not soon, by following the impulses of his heart, become the worst of sinners." But the grace of God, which rectifies the intellect of man, can also reform the unregulated emotions of the heart. Bossuet explains this with his usual profundity: "When the propensity of covetousness rules in the soul, it becomes the captive of the corruptible, and consequently criminal. But God, to prevent this disorder, breathes into the hearts of His true children, chastity and the delight in the eternal, which may deliver them from slavery, and make them love God above all things. Let us hear the promise which He made to the heirs of the New Testament: 'I will write,' said He, 'my law in their hearts.' What is it, to write the law in our hearts, if not to make us love the justice which shines so magnificently in the law; and to make us love it with so powerful an affection, that, notwithstanding all the obstacles of the world, it may be the rule of our life."—(Bossuet, *Refutation of the Catechism of Ferry*, Ch x.)

The regenerated spirit, on the contrary, is the seat of light and life. Therein is born and developed the superior existence, in opposition to that life, entirely mechanical and sensual, which resists its strivings. If man be twofold in his nature, he

should develop in himself, by the struggle, the elements of the *beautiful*, the *holy*, and the *just*. To live according to the flesh is, to quote the Apostle, to die. To rule the flesh by the spirit, and to hold it in subjection, is, to live. These are the very words of the great Apostle, quoted by us a little ago. Bourdaloue thus comments upon the doctrine of St. Paul: "Mortification of the passions, the means of maintaining us in innocence, and the necessary means. For it is impossible to preserve innocence in a heart, while the passions there hold sway. As their source is poisoned, and their origin is in that miserable concupiscence which bears us towards external objects, and whose sole end is to be satisfied at whatsoever price, so, if we listen to them and follow their suggestions, they force us in a thousand ways to break the law of God, and precipitate us into every kind of sin." After having thus established the necessity of interior mortification in order to preserve purity, the admirable theologian shows, with the same force of logic, the rigorous obligation of exterior penance. "I know," says he, "that heresy, with her pretended reforms, cannot abide these exterior practices, and that, having destroyed penance in its most essential parts, by taking from it confession, and even contrition for sin, or at least by not admitting them as necessary,

she has found means still farther to lighten it, by rejecting, as useless, works of satisfaction, by abolishing the precept of fasting, and by considering as weakness and folly, all the austerities of the saints: but it is enough that the enemies of the Church have thus decided, to determine us against following the dangerous attraction of a doctrine, so fitted to seduce and corrupt souls. No, Christians, in whatever manner we view it, there is no true penance without the mortification of the body; and so long as our bodies, after sin, remain unpunished, so long as they do not suffer the chastisement which a holy zeal for avenging God obliges us to impose upon them, so long will our hearts be not entirely converted, and God will not deem Himself fully satisfied. Since the Saviour of the world has done penance for us at the expense of His adorable flesh, it is impossible, says St. Augustin, that we ourselves should do otherwise; we must accomplish in our flesh that which, by an admirable secret of the wisdom of God, is wanting of the satisfactions and sufferings of our Divine Mediator. Since sin reigns in our flesh, as St. Paul says, in our flesh must also reign penance, for penance must rule wherever sin has dominion. Our bodies, by an unfortunate contagion, and by the close union they have with our souls, become the accomplices of sin, are often its

source and origin, so that the same Apostle does not fear to call them, bodies of sin: *corpus peccati!* as if sin were in fact incorporated in us, and our bodies were themselves sinful substances; an expression which the Manicheans formerly abused, but which in the orthodox sense, signifies nothing more than bodies subject to sin, bodies inhabited by sin. Our bodies, I say, partake in the sin; it is then just they should participate in the expiation and reparation for sin, which should be made by penance. Although the virtue and merit of penance are in the will, the exercise and practice of penance should consist, in part, in the mortification of the body; and whoso reasons otherwise, is in error, and has wandered from the truth."—(BOURDALOUE, *Pensees*, Mortification of the Senses; and *Careme*, Sermon on the Ceremony of the Ashes.)

The regenerated spirit represents here below divine liberty and divine intelligence; its sphere is that of sublimity and light. The flesh is, on the other hand, the gloomy region where desires without restraint, consuming cupidities, and insatiable passions, rage with savage impetuosity. "Thus," said Bossuet, "I exhort you, my brethren, in the words of the holy Apostle, that you should put off the carnal man. Free yourselves from the earthly man who has only corrupt desires; declare your-

selves, by a just sentence, descended from Heaven, and made for Heaven, by rejecting the corporal affections which attach you to earth. 'Go out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing: and I will receive you.'"—(BOSSUET, *Sermon on Virginity*—on the occasion of a profession.) In this mysterious antithesis of spirit and flesh, the practical morality of Christianity is admirably personified.

It is impossible not to recognise, as soon as we reflect, the great superiority that such a system possesses, in explaining the facts of man, and the facts of history, the world of the soul, and the world of humanity. It is only necessary to study our own nature, with attention, to perceive within, these two laws, always struggling, always contending: the law of the flesh and the law of the spirit. Turn your eyes towards a certain side of human nature, behold what narrow egotism, what foolish pride, what covetousness! See what abject affections, what antipathy to order and virtue, what horror of law. You are not man, if you do not hear the tempest of passion howling in the depths of your heart, and feel every instant, unquiet thoughts, agitating desires, and stormy rebellion, like venomous plants, springing into being. Listen to the eloquent lamentations of the Apostle writing to the Romans: "For that

which I work, I understand not. For I do not that good which I will; but the evil which I hate, that I do. If then I do that which I will not, I consent to the law, that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that there dwelleth not in me, that is to say, in my flesh, that which is good. For to will, is present with me; but to accomplish that which is good, I find not. For the good which I will, I do not; but the evil which I will not, that I do. Now if I do that which I will not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that when I have a will to do good, evil is present with me. For I am delighted with the law of God, according to the inward man: But I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind, and captivating me in the law of sin, that is in my members. Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? The grace of God, by Jesus Christ our Lord. Therefore, I myself, with the mind, serve the law of God; but with the flesh, the law of sin."—St. Paul, Romans, vii, 15–25.

Bourdaloue again comments admirably on the doctrine of St. Paul: "Since we were conceived in sin, we truly know ourselves subject to the disorders produced by it, and which are its sad effects;

that is to say, we know that this first sin has drawn upon us a deluge of evils, and that, through the two mortal wounds made by it, ignorance and concupiscence, it has infused the venom of its malignity into all the powers of our souls; thence is there nothing sound within us; thence are our minds capable of the grossest errors; our wills are delivered to the most shameful passions; our imagination is the seat and the source of illusion; and our senses are the gates and the organs of incontinence; thence are we born filled with frailties, subject to the inconstancy and the vanity of our thoughts, slaves to our temperaments and caprices, and governed by our own desires. We are not ignorant that from this cause arises the difficulty of doing good, the tendency and inclination to evil, the repugnance to our duties, the disposition to throw off the yoke of our most legitimate obligations, the hatred of all truth which might correct and reform us, the love of flattery which deceives and corrupts, the aversion to virtue, and the poisoned charm of vice; thence is this internal war, of which we are conscious, this secret rebellion of our very reason against God, this strange obstinacy in desiring always what the law forbids, because the law forbids it; in not desiring what it commands, because the law commands it; in loving, through self-will, what is frequently in itself unlova-

ble, and in rejecting obstinately, that which we are commanded to love, and which merits our affections."—(BOURDALOUE, *The Mysteries*, Sermon on the Conception of the Virgin.)

There is man as he is, but you see not there the whole of man. There he is in his degradation, in all his misery: but this miserable being that one is tempted to trample under foot, is not without greatness and nobility. "Is man," says Bossuet, "man, whom God has made in His own image, only a shadow? That which Jesus Christ came from Heaven to seek on earth, that which He has thought it possible, without self-debasement, to redeem, at the price of His own blood, can it be a mere nothing? Let us confess our error. Entire self-contempt must not be permitted to man, lest, believing with the impious that his life is but a game wherein chance rules, he should be tempted to live according to the will of his blind desires, without law and without guidance." —(BOSSUET, *Funeral Oration on Henrietta of England.)* True, man is this creeping earth-worm; yet is he capable of comprehending virtue, of cherishing order, of seeking self-sacrifice, of raising himself above the skies. Is it not a gigantic ruin, which retains in the midst of its crumbling walls some isolated tower? Is it not the Palm, springing

from the bosom of the arid desert? Is it not the butterfly, starting from the dust, to sport in the sunlight its sparkling and radiant wings? Behold the mystery of the heart, which philosophy either cannot, or will not comprehend; the prodigy of the *duality* of human nature, without which, both humanity and history must remain unintelligible. Do you not see the same tendency continually reproduced in the exterior life of nations? Do you not see everywhere, some men governed by the law of the spirit, and others, intoxicated by the heart, and mis led by the senses?

Man is constantly solicited by these two rival powers, which speak from the depths of his being: the *spirit* and the *flesh*. In all ages, generous and magnanimous souls have listened with avidity to the y law of duty, and, with noble ardor, have triumphed over the petty weaknesses of the heart. Those souls, great in the eyes of the age in which they lived, are yet more honored in the memory of posterity. The sacrifice, made by them, of the fleeting pleasures of life, renders their remembrance precious to all good men. Their names are to us as the names of our friends; their glory is as dear to us as our own; their memory encourages and still sustains us. Ah! no, it was not by obeying the unregulated impulses of the heart, that they found the

true path to the respect and love of all! Contemplate, on the other hand, in the arena called history, the debased slaves of flesh and blood. We are dismayed by the profound degradation into which so many superior minds have fallen, who sought pleasure, rather than duty: the recollection of their disorders still terrifies the imagination. We may see, even among the noblest minds of antiquity, to what excesses the consecration of the natural instincts led. We can say but little here. As this book is addressed to several classes of readers, we are obliged to restrain ourselves within narrow limits. We confine ourselves then, to the repetition of what we have already said in the first part of *Christ et l'Evangile:* "If the sage of the stoics, when the question is of the spiritual direction of his life, must constantly raise himself above the prejudices which govern the vulgar, what rule should he adopt, who is not incommoded by doubtful convictions?" It is well known that the eloquent author of *Emile*, in order to brand the corrupt society of the eighteenth century, all the passions of which were however shared by him, deemed it necessary to vaunt to his contemporaries the pure and gentle life led in the depths of the forests, far from the tumults and intrigues of turbulent cities. This is only the idea of Antisthenes, renewed by the school of the Por-

tico, and disguised under rhetorical forms. To reduce man to the instincts of a nature imagined always essentially upright, and inclined to good, was the leading idea of the successors of Zeno. The sage, in his haughty and savage independence, believed himself obliged by duty, by conscience, and by the obedience due to the imperious voice which spoke within his soul, to approach as nearly as possible to the animal instincts. Let no one think this expression in the least degree exaggerated. Should any one doubt it, let him, instead of listening to us, hearken to the historians of philosophy: "After the example of Aristotle, says Ritter, they consider all virtue as founded on instinct. The instinct of man differs from that of animals, in that it ought to develop itself in conformity with reason. It is in order to accomplish the precept of living in conformity with nature, that they recommend the cynical mode of life, and present the animal as a model to man."—(Ritter, *History of Ancient Philosophy*, Vol. III.*)

* "This morality, says M. J. Simon, even were it sanctioned and legitimated, and its principles intelligible, is impossible in practice, and false in its requirements."—(J. Simon, "Manuel de Philosophie.") See also the article "Epictetus," in the "Dictionnaire des Sciences Philosophiques."—"Live in conformity with nature! Universal nature, was intended by Cleanthes;

St. Paul, in his eloquent Epistle to the Romans, has traced so living a picture of pagan licentiousness, that we may see he had still under his eyes the afflicting spectacle of the greatest heart-misery which, perhaps, the world has ever known. Speaking of the philosophers, he describes their morals as follows: "Wherefore God gave them up to the desires of their heart, unto uncleanness, to dishonor their own bodies among themselves Who changed the truth of God into a lie; and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is

---

human nature, abstracted from universal nature, by Chrysippus. . . . . The principle remains the same, but the sense is more precise, and the interpretation less dangerous. However it was in the interpretation of this very precept, that this vigorous mind was self-deceived, and was led into an extravagant cynicism. In Chrysippus, may be found a justification of incest, an exhortation to feed on human bodies, an apology for prostitution, &c. Consider the animals, said the bold logician, and you will find by their example, that none of these things are immoral, or contrary to nature."—(HENNE, article "Chrysippus." in the "Dictionnaire des Sciences Philosophiques") "Stoicism, says again Ritter, permits almost everything to the wise man, provided neither pleasure nor interest be the incitements to action. Not to mention their defence of interested lying, of suicide, of prostitution, their contempt for burial, and many other similar things, they permit, to the sage, actions which revolt nature, and which it is scarcely allowable to name: they do not think the use

blessed forever.—Amen. For this cause God delivered them up to shameful affections."—St. Paul, Rom. i, 24, 25, 26. I have designedly abridged the quotation, in order to spare the youth of some of my readers the inflexible severity of the Apostle's words.

Perhaps it will be said that St. Paul has calumniated the pagan philosophers. Alas! all the monuments of antiquity attest the profound degradation of the most eminent men of the Greco-Roman society. According to the infidel Gibbon, the least immoral of the first fifteen Roman emperors was

---

of human flesh, as food, against nature, and unions such as that of Œdipus and Jocasta are in their eyes entirely indifferent." I have abridged Ritter, notwithstanding his already prudent reserve. Curious details may be found on the taste of the stoics for drunkenness, in Diogenes Lærtius, "De vitis Philosophorum." lib. VII, § 26 and 84; in Plutarch, "Life of Cato of Utica;" in Seneca, last chapter of the "Treatise on Tranquillity of Soul." As to the infamous vices of Zeno. of Chrysippus, and of Cleanthes, see Sextus Empiricus, and Diogenes Lærtius, book VII, § 18. On the doctrine of incest. consult Sextus Empiricus, Lærtius, and the refutation of the stoics by Plutarch. They collect on this point the opinions of Chrysippus. For the ideas of Zeno and Chrysippus on community of wives, see Diogenes Lærtiùs, book VII, § 131. It is useless to speak of the pride of the stoics. This point is sufficiently well known. (See Stanley, "History of Philosophy." 739-741.)

Claudius, who lived in incest. The unexpurgated works of Virgil, of Tibullus, and of Horace, would cause the least scrupulous member of Christian society to blush. Cicero, the *gentleman* of paganism,—Cicero, Pontiff, Consul, Father of his Country, makes revelations to Cotta on the morals of the philosophers, much more overwhelming than those of St. Paul.—*(De nat. Deor.*, l. 28.) Seneca is neither less clear, nor less alarming.—*(Epistola* XCV.) Lucian, the irreconcilable enemy of the Christians, crushes under bitter epigrams the same philosophers whose morality St. Paul has decried.—*(Amores.)* I will not cite Salvian, because he may be accused of Christian prejudices.—*(De guberna tione Dei*, lib. VII.)

What a miracle then is Christianity, which has drawn the world from so profound a gulf of misery and infamy; and how frightful was the condition of those sublime spirits, who often knew the truth, but who held her captive rather than abandon their sinful propensities! How fully does this melancholy history convince us of the profound degradation of a heart which would rather stifle than serve truth, that immortal daughter of the Most High! Indeed, we should soon see all the excesses of antiquity reappear among us, if a hypocritical and perverted morality, legitimating all the inclinations of

the heart, were to throw the reins to those unruly passions, which are as yet, fortunately for the happiness of the world, restrained by Christian modesty.

Consider, in fact, what is passing around us. In his *Confessions*, as well as in the *Heloise*, Jean-Jaques Rousseau attempted to obtain a kind of toleration for the excesses of the heart. He represented his heroes and himself as *fatally* conquered by the concurrence of circumstances; he spoke with so much enthusiasm of those *sacred* impulses, before which all should bow, that apparently there was but little more to be said in order completely to reassure all consciences, and to lull them peacefully to sleep on the downy pillow of the passions. Alas! would to Heaven, for the sake of virtue and truth, that these fatal germs had not fallen on so fertile a soil. The defence of the passions was to find among us, after Rousseau, more than one popular advocate. "The theory of the liberty of the passions, necessarily led Fourier and his school to consequences, of which the singularity is the least defect. Obliged not only to authorise the inconstancy of tastes and affections, but to legitimate this malady of the soul, which is one of the notes of his social scale, he preaches it in its effects the most shocking to human dignity. The family not being the basis of the society which he desires to establish, we may readily

conceive that marriage is, in his eyes, neither a religious bond, nor even a civil contract; but he authorises a liberty in the relations of men and women, which wounds the deep sentiments in which these relations have their origin. He justifies infidelities in unions formed upon the faith of mutual promises, thus destroying the agreement of word with act. Besides, this agreement could not exist, since beings who obey their passions are not their own masters, and consequently cannot dispose of themselves. Our pen refuses to analyse the solutions of Fourierism in all that has reference to these relations; we must be content to say, that this delicate portion of social existence is treated with a cynicism, which revolts not only Christian morality, but even natural modesty."—(De Lourdoueix, *Le Fourierism devant le Siecle*, § 5, in the *Annales de Philosophie Chretienne*, and above all Ott, *Revue Nationale*, *Decembre*, 1847, *l'Ecole Phalansterienne.*)

Anti-Christian morality has been rendered popular especially by G. Sand, in *Lelia*, in *Jacques*, and in *Consuelo*, and by Eugene Sue, in the *Mysteries of Paris*, the *Wandering Jew*, and in *Martin the Foundling*. The great success of the Wandering Jew and the Mysteries of Paris, proves the deep corruption of the contemporaneous society. This society, whose apology is plead in the *Revue des*

Deux-Mondes, the *Journal des Debats*, and in *La Presse*, pretends to be infinitely more moral and religious than the world of the eighteenth century. I have studied with the greatest attention the history of the literature of the preceding century, and I venture boldly to affirm, without fear of being seriously contradicted by reflecting minds, that in France the conspiracy against the sanctity of Christian morals has never been stronger or more general than at the present time.* Many are deceived by the fact, that Catholic dogmas are *less openly* attacked. But why should we feign to be ignorant, that the war is waged with no less violence, under more polished appearances. Besides, when Christian morals are insulted, when, in marriage, the fundamental institution of the Catholic family is assailed, and the theory of pleasure is substituted for the law of devotion, is not Christianity attacked in its essential bases? May Providence, who so severely punished the corruption of the eighteenth century, preserve us from a repetition of the bloody expiation of '93!

Rousseau, covered with the leprosy of his excesses, exhibited himself without blushing in all his degradation, and audaciously dared to claim the

* This passage was written in 1847.

sympathy of the human race for himself and for his life, *because he had loved much!* The literature of the nineteenth century has seized with eagerness upon this idea. This debauching theme has become the favorite text of the authors of dramas and romances. Poetry and Art, whose holy mission is to remind men of the sublimity of virtue, of the glory of heroes, and of all noble and generous thoughts, now present themselves as active schools of depraved morality. Two hundred years ago, certain books were hidden, like shameful deeds. The whole of society would have spurned the man who had dared to say: "That is my work." But now, in the face of day, one of the iniquities is committed, most fitting to outrage every conscience which has any remains of courage and modesty. Books, wherein the grossest inclinations of the heart are represented as the final and legitimate expression of *duty* and of *right*, are offered, as food, to all the minds of this corrupt world. I should never cease, were I to point out this entire literature which sometimes knows only the lingo of the bagnio, or the speech of prostitutes. However, I cannot avoid speaking of a celebrated writer, who appears to me to apply the fundamental principle of the *Confessions*, to the society of the nineteenth century, with a vigor of logic and a talent impossible not to ac-

knowledge. The morality of *Lelia* is well known. M. de Milly (Alphonse du Valconseil) quotes some fragments from Pulcherie's abominable discourses, of which he declares himself unable, and not sufficiently daring, to give a complete idea. This incarnation of voluptuousness, thus terminates one of her revolting tirades: "Anacreon has written my liturgy; I have taken antiquity as my model, the goddesses of Greece for my divinities. To keep me from despair, I have the religion of pleasure. To brave shame, is a virtue, a power, a deed of wisdom!" Lelia is still more odious and detestable, and M. de Milly has remarked, with admirable energy, "that her language is that of a demon, mad at being a woman."—(Alphonse de Milly, *Revue des romans contemporaires*, G. Sand, *Lelia.*) Nevertheless, it is concerning the abominable romance of Lelia, that M. Lerminier, then Professor in the College of France, Counsellor of State, Master of Requests, and *certes* Chevalier of the Legion of Honor, dared to write these lines, which we offer for the consideration of fathers of families: "Patience! he exclaims, behold the *true priestess*, the real spoil of God. The earth trembles under the impetuous tread of *Lelia;* she appears, and with one bound places herself at the head, not only of women but of men. An inspired bacchante, she leads in the

present age the chorus of intelligences who follow her with ardor. On, Lelia! continue thy triumphantly sad march! Thou art self-devoted; shrink not, obey *thy God!* He has sent thee, after the Protestant (Mad. de Stael) and the Jewess (Mad. de Varnaghen) to be in the clear light of day the poet of the infinite. . . . . Forsake not the sublime boldness of thy genius! Restore the laws of love and of marriage! Sing, weep not, and, far from being consumed by the divine fire which thou bearest, pour it out upon the world!"—(LERMINIER, *Au dela du Rhin.*)

Has the government censured this cynical and anti-social panegyric of so immoral a book? Mourn now (1847), ye conservatives, over the progress of passions and bad morals! We should never cease, were we to quote all the passages of the same character. Have not the very men who condemned the Jesuits and *lax morals*, decorated MM. Frederic Soulié and de Balsac with the Legion of Honor? The glorious sign that the country places on the breasts of its brave defenders has been seen shining on the dress of the authors of the *Devil's Memoirs*, and the *Maid with the golden eyes!* It is some amends that MM. de Falloux, de Ravignan, de Montalembert, Lacordaire and Ozanam will, perhaps, never belong to the French Academy!

The writings of the author of *Indiana*, seem to me the most eloquent and exact development of the sentimental theory of the Genevan philosopher. If J. J. Rousseau has truly spoken, George Sand is not wrong.* You should be just and impartial. You place Jean-Jaques in the Pantheon; and you drag Sand to the scaffold! Yet Rousseau himself understood, that his books naturally brought in their train all the disastrous consequences, with which the works of Sand have been reproached, and he had the boldness to say concerning the *Nouvelle Heloise:* "Any young girl who will open this book, is lost!" You blush for those who are more logical, more courageous than yourselves! If you accept the *Savoyard Vicar*, why should *Spiridion* revolt you?

* Rousseau himself was very far from being sure that he had truly spoken. On one occasion, he wrote: "I cannot think it possible to be virtuous without religion; for a long time I held this false opinion; upon this point, I am no longer deceived."—("Tresors de l'eloquence.") Elsewhere, he says: "I cannot look upon any one of my books without shuddering; instead of instructing, I corrupt; instead of nourishing, I poison; passion misleads me, and with all my fine discourses, I am only a wretched criminal."--("Œuvres comp." XXIV, 236 and 307.) Byron too, did he not say of himself, that he was more Christian than any one believed? Captain Medwin relates, that even in the midst of the obscure contradictions of his conversation, he never denied the Divine Founder of Christianity. We found

Is not *Brother Alexis* a worthy successor to the *Vicar?* Is Madame de Warens, the *saint* of Rousseau, more noble or more poetical than *Indiana?* *Jaques* is a fitting continuation of *Wolmar*. *Valentine* is but a pin-prick after the *Confessions!*

We have been struck by the close analogy between the doctrines of *Emile* on revelation, and those of *Spiridion* on the development and the future of Christianity. Father Alexis, a priest like the Savoyard Vicar, likewise reveals to a neophyte the formulas of a new religion. "We do not reject the whole of revelation, says he, and the interior sense suffices to a certain point; but we join to it additional proofs; as to the past, the testimony of humanity entire; as to the present, the adherence of all pure consciences to the worship of the Divi-

---

him one day, says he, sad and silent. At last he said to us: "Here is a little book on Christianity which has been sent me, and which makes me very uneasy. The reasonings appear to me very strong, and the proofs are alarming. I do not think you could answer them, Shelley; at least, I am sure I could not, and besides I don't wish to do it." When accused of impiety, an accusation which he always repelled, he replied: "I am no enemy to religion; quite otherwise; the proof of which is, that I am having my daughter brought up a good Catholic, in a convent of the Romagna; for I think if we are to have any religion, we cannot have too much. I am strongly inclined in favor of Catholic dogmas."—("Tresors de l'eloquence.")

nity, and the eloquent voice of our own hearts. If I understand you rightly, said Angelo, you accept all that is eternally divine in revelation, its grand ideas upon the Divinity and immortality, the precepts of virtue, and the duties thence proceeding. And also, interrupted Father Alexis, the great discoveries in science, the masterpieces of art and poetry, the innovation of reformers in all times, and in all countries. All that man calls inspiration, I call likewise, revelation; for man draws from Heaven itself his knowledge of the ideal; and his conquest of the sublime truths which lead to it (to Heaven or to the ideal?), is a compact, a marriage between the human intelligence, which seeks, aspires, demands, and the divine intelligence, which likewise seeks the heart of man, aspires to fill it, and consents to reign in it. . . . . We can adore, in a man possessing great learning or great virtue, a splendid reflection of the Deity. O Christ, a time will come when new altars, more worthy of thee, will be raised in thy honor, which will restore to thee thy true greatness, that of having been really the son of the woman, and the Saviour, that is the friend of humanity, and the prophet of the ideal! And the successor of Plato, said Angelo (the neophyte), as Plato was of the other *prophets* whom we venerate, and whose disciples we are. . .but free disciples. . . .

It is not only our privilege, but our duty, as well as our destiny, to explain them, and to aid in the continuation of their labors. Our mission is, to be their successors. It is the will of God that we should progress, and if He in every age calls Prophets into existence, it is, that they may urge the generations ever in advance of themselves, as beseems men, and not that they may force them to follow, like servile flocks. When Jesus cured the paralytic, he did not say to him: 'Prostrate thyself and follow me!' but 'Arise and walk!' We go towards the Future; we go filled with the Past, and occupying the Present with study, meditation, and a continual effort after perfection. . . ."—(GEORGE SAND, *Spiridion.)*

To avoid interminable digressions, which would turn us aside from the subject we propose to examine, I would remark, that George Sand is governed by a twofold intention; and this double idea is but the necessary corollary to the sentimental theory of the school of Rousseau. When you have established, as a principle in morals, the *holiness* of the natural impulses, why do you recoil before the vain obstacles opposed to you by the world? Can usages or laws be made in opposition to the *arbiter* of the *just*, the *beautiful*, and the *holy*? The affections of the heart are so precious, and at the same time so invincible, that to crush one of them is an actual

crime against human nature, against God Himself, the Author and Preserver of all moral order.

Do we not read in George Sand these words, which contain the key to the social revolutions that now menace France? "Society can only exist through arbitrary laws, excellent for the masses, but stupid and horrible for individuals."—(GEORGE SAND, *Jaques.*) One of the characters in Lelia dares to say: "The spirit of good and the spirit of evil are one, *for they are God;* good and evil are distinctions created by us; *they are unknown to God.*" Does not the philosophy of pantheism, professed by George Sand in her later works, lead to ultra-revolutionary consequences? Doubtless the greater part of our readers would think we exaggerated, did we not quote the very words of George Sand. In *Lelia*, Stenio, worn out with pride, debauch, voluptuousness, and dissipation, decides upon suicide. Before dying, he addresses to God these monstrous words, which may be regarded as the final expression of moral and religious Radicalism: "And Thou, unknown Power, whom formerly I in my simplicity adored, mysterious Master of our paltry destinies, whom I *still* recognise, but before whom I *no longer bow;* if it be my duty to bend the knee and bless thee for this bitter life, manifest thyself, and let me at least hope to be heard by thee! But

what have I to hope or to fear? What am I, that I should excite thy anger or merit thy love? What have I accomplished here of good or of evil? I have obeyed the organisation given me; I have exhausted all things real, and have aspired to the impossible; I have performed my task as a man. If I have shortened its duration by a few days, *what is it to thee?* If I have extinguished the light of my intelligence by the abuse of pleasure, what matters it to the universe, that Stenio leaves in the memories of men some hundreds of verses more or less? If thou art an irritable and vindictive Master, life can be for me no refuge, and do as I may, I cannot escape the expiations of the other life. If Thou art just and good, thou wilt receive me in thy bosom, and thou wilt cure the ills from which I suffer. If thou existest not. . . .Oh! then *am I myself God*, and my own master, and I can break both temple and idol! . . ."—(ALPHONSE DE MILLY [A. de Valconseil], *Revue des Romans*, G. SAND, *Lelia.*)

Nor is this a case by itself. Look into *Andre*, into *Valentine*, into the *Compagnon du tour de France*, into *Consuelo;* you will find all the fragile barriers of nobility, of modesty, of position, of fortune, of religion, of social prejudices, shattered in the presence of the *holy*, the *irresistible*, and ever victorious law of *love!* Do you think that marriage,

that once venerated basis of civil society, will arrest this expansive revolution of *love*, which is to transform the whole modern world? Do not fear! In *Indiana*, and in *Jaques*, ample justice will be meted out to that antiquated remnant of *Christian prejudices!* In *Consuelo* and in the *Countess of Rudolstadt*, you will find a new Gospel, in the name of a new God, loose the marriage bonds of those whom *love* has ceased to unite! It will even become *impossible* for a woman to remain faithful, because it is a *crime to do violence to love*

All this is logical, and you have no right to complain. But what a lesson, and what an end! Blessed be Heaven which permits the light to shine, notwithstanding the positive intentions of certain persons, who labor only for the triumph of evil! The system which dictated the *Confessions* and the *Nouvelle Heloise*, is not yet a century old, and it has already produced *Indiana* and *Consuelo*, while the philosophy of *Emile* has reached a climax in the book entitled *Humanity*, and in the *Sketch of a Philosophy!* Behold the seal of reprobation with which God marks all evil doctrines · they can never halt in their providential development, and sooner or later they reach the abyss.

CHAPTER II.

MELANCHOLY.

I HAVE LOVED, I HAVE BEEN LOVED! MISERABLE ME! WHAT CHAINS OF LINKED SORROWS! AND ONCE BOUND, WITH WHAT RODS OF IRON HAVE JEALOUSY, SUSPICION, VANITY, ANGER, AND CONTENTION SCOURGED ME!—(*St. Augustine.*)

In the preceding chapter, I made the assertion, that the heart can never lead to virtue; I now add, that it is equally incapable of conducting to happi ness. I could find a thousand reasons in support of my position. It is a very agreeable reflection, that the greatest and most able minds have ever exhorted men to detach themselves from the fragile and perishable things of earth, and have directed them towards the imperishable world of thought, where reign eternally light and virtue. Rousseau himself perceived in a confused way, that in order to live calmly and peacefully, we must detach ourselves from the passionate affection inspired by creatures. He wrote to Madame B.: "That internal void of which you complain is never felt but in hearts made to be filled; contracted hearts are never conscious of a vacuum, because they are always full of nothings; while, on the contrary, there are some

so craving, that they can never be satisfied by the miserable beings surrounding them. If nature has made you the rare and fatal gift of a heart too sensitive to the necessity of happiness, seek nothing out of it: it must feed upon its own substance. All the felicity, Madame, which we would draw from that which is foreign to ourselves, is a false felicity. . . . . If you are what I believe you to be, you will never be happy but through yourself; for that end, seek nothing out of yourself. That moral sense, so rare among men; that exquisite feeling of the beautiful, the true, and the just, which always reacts upon ourselves, holds the soul, so endowed, in a continual state of rapture, which is the most delightful of enjoyments. The rigor of fate, the wickedness of men, unforseen evils, calamities of all kinds, may benumb for a time, but can never extinguish it; and sometimes, when almost crushed under the weight of human atrocity, a sudden explosion may render back all its original brilliancy. . . ." —(J. J. Rousseau, *Correspondence*, dated 1770.) Who would believe this to be the same man who dared to sign the obscene pages of the *Confessions*?

Even from the midst of the impurities of paganism we may hear a thousand eloquent voices, speaking with a conviction full of persuasion and energy, of the sadness into which subjection to the affections

of sense, and the heavy slavery of the passions, plunge the soul. If the philosophers of the sentimental school, were to appear in the presence of the powerful intellects of antiquity, would not the latter fancy they were listening to the effeminate philosophy of the gardens of Epicurus, and the impure language of the sophists of Cyrene? Yes, I am fully convinced that their contempt would bring blushes to the cheeks of those men, who, nourished in the pure light of the Gospel, have preferred to its divine morality the sensuality and licentiousness of vanquished paganism.

Let us hear on this question Franz de Champagny, the eloquent historian of the *Cæsars*. The author of this fine work depicts the revival of pagan impurity in the midst of the Saturnalia of '93: "With paganism in worship came paganism in morals. Through the love of paradox, some have amused themselves of late by transforming into models of chastity and domestic virtue, those men in whom, as they say, we must recognise some *roughness of form* and some *inequalities of character;* eulogiums have not been wanting on their austerity, nay, their republican sanctity; I will not trouble these harmless panegyrics; I confine myself to the acts of authority. If pagan impurity were not sufficiently manifested by the choice of those shameful god-

desses, who would have made the prostitutes of Corinth blush in the temple of Venus, was it not clearly written in the law passed by the Lycurguses of the Convention, which assured to the guilty woman the price of her dishonor? in that system of civil right, effaced thank God the day after its birth, which declared bastardy legitimate, dishonored the family, debased marriage, annihilated paternal rights, broke the conjugal union at the capricious demand of either husband or wife, and re-established, under a different name and with some new forms, the ancient right of repudiation?"—(*Les Cæsars*, IV, A word of modern Paganism. See also the law of June 28th, 1793; the decree of Feb. 5th, 1794; the law of Sept. 7th, 1793; the decree of Sept. 25th, 1792; the law of April 28th, 1794.)

But what would the mighty geniuses, whom the Gospel has produced in the bosom of Christian civilisation, say, could they reappear among us? Oh! with what horror would these illustrious thinkers retreat into their eternal abodes, could they hear the wicked maxims they so combatted, now boldly advocated?

What, however, do the men of whom we speak care for the disgust which they excite in all pure minds? Have they ever measured the abyss which separates them from all ancient tradition? Blinded

by an insane desire for happiness and pleasure they have concentrated on this passion all their hopes for the future, and to this dream have they sacrificed virtue in this world, and eternal blessedness in the next. Oh! but I pity these poor souls, wandering amid the endless aberrations of the mind and heart! How gladly would I give them a little repose, and light, and peace! Indeed, I am quite sure that all have not an invincible attachment to evil, and it is that burning thirst for happiness by which they are consumed which blinds them entirely to their true interests in time, and for eternity. But I appeal to experience; without virtue and truth, can there be real and lasting peace? The Scriptures represent men of pleasure as crying out at the end of their career: "We wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity and destruction, and have walked through hard ways."*

I appeal to you, Jerome and Augustin! Have you not both, with fiery eagerness, drained all the cups of pleasure? Have not your souls, during long years, loved everything? Did you not break through all salutary restraints? Your hearts burst out on the whole of creation, like a torrent without

* "Lassati sumus in via iniquitatis et perditionis, et ambulavimus vias difficiles."—Wisdom, v. 7.

bounds and without banks: life seemed far too short, to exhaust the intense desire of loving which devoured all your being. But then came days of suffering and tribulation of heart! Then did the feeling of truth and eternity enter into your souls, like that sharp sword which penetrates even to the marrow of the bones.

It is interesting to hear how the eloquent Bishop of Hippo relates, in the sorrow of his penitence, the guilty ardors of his first loves, in the second book of his *Confessions*: "When St. Augustine," M. Saint-Marc Girardin very felicitously remarks, "paints that first insurrection of the senses, I admire the modesty of his language; and do not think this reserve the result of coldness, as his repentance exaggerates rather than diminishes his own idea of his faults; he describes them most forcibly, but without the slightest violation of decency. He is true, without being immodest; and bold, without being cynical. St. Augustine speaks of his loves with a reserve mingled with shame. The recitals are few, and nothing is introduced for the sake of giving interest to the adventures; such interest would have been a new sin. As much as Rousseau designedly embellishes his descriptions with charms and graces, so much does St. Augustine carefully hide the meltings of his soul."—(SAINT-MARC GIRARDIN, *Essais de litterature*, II, S. Augustin.)

And you Jerome, have you ever regretted having preferred the grotto at Bethlehem, to the intoxicating pleasures of Rome? Many times must you have said with the repentant Augustin: *Sero te cognovi, sero te amavi, pulchritudo increata;* "Too late have I known Thee; too late loved Thee, O Beauty uncreated!" "How in a moment," he says again, surprised at the miraculous change which grace had effected in him, and recounting no longer his miseries, but the mercies of the Lord; "how in one moment did I find pleasure in renouncing the criminal enjoyments of the world, and how sweet it was to abandon what I had so feared to lose! For Thou, O my God! who art the only true and sovereign good capable of filling a soul, Thou wert to me the substitute for all pleasures; and the joy of finding myself ruled by Thee, the joy of having conquered myself, was for me more blissful than all my past delights."

St. Augustin and St. Jerome felt alike that the delights of Rome and Milan were not sufficient to satisfy the boundless cravings of the heart of man. St. Augustine goes even farther: he proves, with admirable eloquence, that nothing created can satisfy the devouring cravings of the heart of man. "Silence, says he in the *Confessions*, silence to the voice of the flesh, to the creatures of earth and sea!

Silence to the heavens, silence to the soul itself, to the thoughts of life, to the dreams of the night, and the illusions of the day! Let every tongue be silent, let every sign be effaced, let all that is of time and the moment vanish! Wherefore is the cry perpetual which the universe utters to the glory of the Creator: *It is God, it is the Eternal who has created us?* No, I will hear only the voice of God: let God speak, let Him alone speak amid the universal silence, not with the perishable tongue of the flesh, nor with the harmonious voice of the angels, nor with the sound of the winds, nor with the emblem of the divine symbols; Him alone will I hear, and at the sound of His voice our souls will be lifted up, and our thoughts will be lost in the eternity of the Divine Wisdom." And you, O Rousseau, I ask you, did you ever find that happiness after which you so long sighed? Undeceived with regard to the illusions of the heart and the passions, Augustin and Jerome sleep in the Lord, full of calmness and peace. You, who were not enslaved by their *Christian prejudices*, you found, no doubt, in your own heart, a life more full of joys and consolations! Freed from the shackles of faith, you must have been able, in the full play of all the natural impulses, to seize upon a much truer happiness! But, O Philosopher, why then is the history of your life,

written doubtless by you with so much candor to show us the paths which lead to happiness, so overflowing with bitterness? Why is your heart so torn, and your soul so lacerated? Have not love and the passions satisfied your being? Whence comes that cruel disenchantment, portrayed in every word of your soul's revelations? Ah! I comprehend why you wrote to one of your friends, not to leave the simple and upright paths of our Christian life! I know now, why your last days were so cruel, and so bitter; I can explain your pains and anguish; I finally understand the mysterious and despairing death, which crowned the drama of the *Confessions!*

The death of Rousseau has given rise to many conjectures. Madame de Stael is of the opinion that he terminated his life by suicide. "Rousseau," says she, "after having passed his life *in the midst of the most tormenting anxieties*, terminated his melancholy existence by poison; the crowning inconsistency of the most inconsistent of men." If the *suicide* may be doubted, the *anxieties* cannot be denied.

Let us turn for a moment and contrast this incurable grief, with the joy which filled the heart of the illustrious Stolberg after his conversion! "My heart," said he then, "inundated by a torrent of holy joy, should be a temple, where the praises of

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, may be unceasingly heard; for He has had mercy on Sophia and myself, and He will be merciful to my children. He has regarded with a kind indulgence my desire of knowing the truth, a desire to which He Himself gave birth; He has heard the prayers addressed to Him for me by pious souls, prostrated at the foot of his altars." "Blessed be Jesus Christ," were the last words of Stolberg. His mortal remains were not borne to a rationalistic Pantheon; but on an unpretending stone, were carved these simple and touching words: "GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD, AS TO GIVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON; THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH IN HIM, MAY NOT PERISH, BUT MAY HAVE LIFE EVERLASTING." It would seem that the celebrated Lavater, the friend of Stolberg, must have had a presentiment of his admirable death, when he composed the following beautiful passage: "One day, a virtuous man met Death. Hail! messenger of immortality, I bid thee hail! Thus was he greeted by the virtuous man. How, said Death, thou son of sin, dost thou not tremble before me? No; he who has no cause to tremble before himself, need not tremble before thee. Dost thou not shudder at the aspect of the maladies whose groaning train precedes me, and at the cold sweat dropping from my wings? No, answered the virtuous man. And why

dost thou not shudder? Because those maladies, and that sweat, announce thy presence. And who then art thou, mortal, who dost not fear me? *I am a Christian!*"

Heap together as many sophistical arguments as you will, pervert principles and laws, yet will you eternally find in the heart of man an abyss, ever deep, ever craving, which nothing can fill. Human nature bears engraved in the very depths of its essence the ineffaceable impress of the infinite. It is vain to hope that these vain delights, these illusions, these ephemeral passions, can ever fully respond to the requirements of your soul. There is, in all created things, a fountain of weakness and impotence, which must ever render them incapable of satisfying the demands of the heart. That which saddens and torments you, O men of pleasure, is the noblest privilege, the truest greatness of your nature; for there is neither love nor power capable of filling the immeasurable depths of our longings and our needs. Consider likewise him who, separated from Christian convictions, desires no other law than the dreams of his heart, nor other love than human passion. He is restless and agitated; he flies to excitement, and finally, becomes exhausted. The world is not vast enough, nor is nature sufficiently beautiful; there is no heart with fire intense enough

to comprehend and love him. Such is Rousseau, such is Werther, such is Don Juan, such is Onéguine, such is Foscolo, such is Obermann, such is Ortis, such is René, such is Sautelet, such is Jacques. The same sentiments appear again in antiquity. Aristotle who, as is universally known, abandoned himself during his whole life to the guidance of his passions, found so little felicity in his unregulated existence that he denied the reality of happiness among men; asserting that they possessed of it only a deceitful shadow.—(*Ethics*, X, 8.)

But let us listen a little:

"Childe Harold basked him in the noontide sun,
Disporting here and there like any other fly,
Nor deem'd before his little day was done
One blast might chill him into misery.
But long ere scarce a third of his passed by,
Worse than adversity the Childe befell;
He felt the fulness of satiety:
Then loathed he in his native land to dwell,
Which seemed to him more lone than Eremite's sad cell.

* * * *

And now Childe Harold was sore sick at heart,
And from his fellow-bachanals would flee;
'Tis said at times the sullen tear would start,
But Pride congealed the drop within his ee.

Apart he stalked in joyless revery,
And from his native land resolved to go
And visit scorching climes beyond the sea.
With pleasure drugged he almost longed for woe,
And e'en for change of scene would seek the shades
below."

Presently he adds:

"And dost thou ask what secret wo
I bear corroding joy and youth?
* * *

It is that settled, ceaseless gloom
The fabled Hebrew wanderer bore;
That will not look beyond the tomb,
But cannot hope for rest before.

What exile from himself can flee?
To zones, though more and more remote,
Still, still pursues, where'er I be,
The blight of life—the demon Thought.

Yet others rapt in pleasure seem,
And taste of all that I forsake;
Oh! may they still of transport dream,
And ne'er, at least like me, awake!

Through many a clime 'tis mine to go,
With many a retrospection cursed;
And all my solace is to know,
Whate'er betides, I've known the worst.

What is that worst? Nay do not ask—
In pity from the search forbear:
Smile on—nor venture to unmask
Man's heart, and view the HELL that's there."

René is no less dismayed by the mysteries and agitations of his passionate heart:

"Eternity! Perhaps in my capacity for loving have I comprehended this incomprehensible word. Heaven has known, and still knows, at this very moment, when my agitated hand traces these lines, what I might have been: men have never known me.

"I write under the tree of the desert, on the shores of a nameless river, in a valley shaded by the same forests which covered it when time began. Imagine, Celuta, that the heart of René is now open before thee: seest thou the wonderful world within it? From this heart come forth flames, which find no food, which devour creation, without being satisfied, which would devour even thee. Beware, virtuous woman! fly from this abyss, leave it in my bosom. . . ."—(*Rene at Natchez*, by Chateaubriand.)

Again, is it not one of George Sand's heroes who pens these despairing lines:

"My soul is resigned," says Jaques, "but still suffering, and I die sad, sad as he, whose only refuge

is a faint hope in Heaven. I will go to the crests of the glaciers, and pray from the bottom of my heart; perhaps faith and enthusiasm may descend upon me at that solemn hour when, severed from men and from life, I cast myself into the abyss, raising my hands to Heaven, and crying with fervor: O justice! justice of God!"

Has not the pen of Jean-Jaques dropped these words, so full of bitterness:

"My body suffers, and my heart groans."

"Petrarch's poetry," sadly remarks Ugo Foscolo, "inspires us with a desire of running, though in vain, after a perfect happiness, until we blindly fall into that despair, which does not long tarry, when hope, stricken by terror, has fled, and grief, like a giant, comes to fill alone the frightful void."*

The soul of St. Preux, Jean-Jaques' ideal, is not less deeply troubled than that of the celebrated Italian poet:

"Yes my lord," exclaims he to his friend, "my soul is oppressed with the weight of life!"

Hear likewise the author of *Notre-Dame:*

"To see our Spring, our morning, our fresh youth,
Fade in the blaze of noon, without one hope
That time the past, the lost, will e'er restore;

---

* "Quando, percossa da terror, s'invola
"Dal tuo volto la speme, e la gigante
"Doglia ne incombra il voto orrendo sola."

To lose illusion, *hope*, and feel that we
Grow old beneath the *daily heavier weight*
Repentance lays on our advancing years!
To seek through art, through verse, through journeys lone,
Through distant skies, through stormy, pathless seas,
To smooth one wrinkle on our troubled brows;
To ask again that age too flushed for sleep,
To tell ourselves that we have been most sad,
Most miserable, and such dreaming fools;
To feel to live is merely to exist;
And, older by ten years,—to steal away,
And pass the day in reading o'er, with tears,
A few old letters, relics of past love!
To fail at last, grow old like faded flowers;
To see our hair grow white, our years fall fast;
To mourn our childhood, and our withered youth;
To drink the bitter lees, the sole remains
Of pungent perfumes, and of empty foam!"

Is the voluptuous poet of Elvira, the sensual author of the *Fall of an Angel*, more content with fate?

"My heart, of all so weary, e'en of hope,
No longer asketh anything from fate;
Ye valleys of my childhood, give me yet
A refuge undisturbed, to wait for death.
Two brooks, there hidden under verdant boughs,
Describe with winding course, that valley's bounds;

One moment do they mingle sounds and waves,
Then soon are lost, not far from their pure source.
Like them, hath flowed my winding stream of life,
Hath nameless vanished, to return no more;
Their waves are limpid, but my troubled soul
Hath ne'er reflected even one bright day.
Too much I've known, too deeply felt and loved!
I come, still living, Lethe's calm to seek.
Fair vale, be thou for me dark Lethe's shore:
My only hope is henceforth, to forget."

Elsewhere the poet cries:

"Why dost thou never cease to sigh
My soul? O answer me!
Whence comes this heavy weight of grief
Which now oppresseth thee?
Thou hast not followed to the grave
With tears, thy last fond friend;
The quiet star that guards thy fate
Doth still above thee bend;
And envy asks, with wondering eye,
What cause hast thou to weep and sigh?

The earth hath many lovely climes,
The Heaven smileth still,
For Glory yet, there's space enough,
And Love, the heart to fill.
Fair Nature offers to thy search
So much that's strange and new

So much no eye hath yet profaned;
Why wither with salt dew
The harvest on life's sunny slope,
The still ungleaned fields of Hope?"

This impotence, which pursues human nature in the midst of all affections that are not infinite, seizes on the slaves of pleasure, and drives them to despair. They desire to attach themselves finally to something; but they find nothing which seems worthy of the dream of happiness that has deceived them. A voice continually cries out to them: "On! On!" And they advance in life, without any diminution in the bitterness and emptiness of their existence. Thus do we behold Milton's Satan fall into fathomless depths, and lose himself in the abyss, without an arm to stay and guide him.

"O unbeliever, unfortunate man," says a celebrated priest, "how pitiable is thy fate! Thou pursuest phantoms, thou knowest thou art self-deceived, and dost not shrink from the shameful avowal! But how vain are thy efforts to satisfy nature, eager for vengeance! . . . . Great God! this sublime voice, this echo of Heaven, this divine instinct which, with irresistible eloquence, speaks within thee, which reminds thee that thou wast made for things eternal and infinite, this winning call to happy days, to days filled with a perfect

calm, this loving impulse, proceeding from Heaven, from reason, from nature, which unceasingly solicits thee to seek an everlasting peace, the plenitude of joy, and the most happy destiny: all this is then nothing to thee; thou closest the avenues of thy soul to this mysterious voice! Truly, the instinct of happiness is immortal in every human bosom. This is the faithful friend whose cry often seems to us importunate, but who never ceases to counsel, to reprove, to reason with us on our most precious possession. She will never cease to speak. Is there a heart hard enough to remain deaf to the charm of her words? Can we then be unconscious of the wrong we inflict, when we outrage her, by considering her inimical and hypocritical? And if we are wretched, it is because we have willed so to be, since we are hostile to the instinct of happiness. But what a life will they lead in this world, who hearken not to this gentle voice, who think it can mislead, who deem it the voice of a false and treacherous friend, who, in a word, place all happiness in illusions and in dreams? Alas! NOT A HOPE remains to them; for there is no more hope for those who believe it to be vain. Their days glide in sad and mournful succession into the abyss of the past, without bringing happiness, without bringing even the expectation thereof."—(Rosmini-Serbati, *Es-*

sai sur l'Esperance.) Alas! how *common* are now mong us, those poor, suffering souls, who have not hope for life in this world, and who will to have none for that to come! We hear them accusing the coldness of Heaven, human customs, social prejudices, the poverty of minds, and the littleness of hearts. Existence, which they formerly dreamed so brilliant and beautiful, now seems to them only a martyrdom, without the crown and glory. They complain that none comprehend their misery, nor understand the true means of consoling their infinite sadness.* But who could ever cure the bleeding wounds of the heart, and calm its eternal repinings? You were not willing to accept the cross, and the cross which you have spurned, now crushes and destroys you! You preferred pleasure to all law, and lo! sorrow envelops you as a burning mantle, a true tunic of the Centaur!

---

* The lines which Escousse and Lebras wrote before committing suicide, are well known:

"Farewell, thou sad and sterile earth,
Chilling sky, and frozen day!
Now like a sprite of lonely birth,
Unperceived I'll steal away.
Ye ever-living palms, ye fair,
False, dreams of burning souls, farewell!
I fold my wings, I gasp for air.
Farewell!"

Life is not ours, and we can never fashion it according to our caprices, or our unregulated affections. It is written, that the whole world shall fight against the unwise,* and the word of the Lord is verified in you, incarnated in your whole existence. The creatures of this world have made your happiness and your sole hope, and already do all creatures rise up against you, escape from your desires, fly your love, and leave you to the boundless solitude of your own souls! Alas! what years can bring you finally peace and joy? Behold those which are already past, the sweet days of pleasure and of fleeting illusions; the Spring roses are already faded; and the festive crowns are withered on your wrinkled brows. Oh! how melancholy will your old age be, old age, which is for all so sad and weary! What memories can console you, and what hope will support your steps, which totter on their pathway to the grave? The remembrance of pleasure brings no solace when the evil days are come. Virtue can think of her sacrifices, of her devotion, of her awakening in immortality; but you, where is your devotion, where are your recollections of virtue? What have you done for immortality? The

* Pugnabit orbis terrarum contra insensatos.—Wisdom, v, 21.

grave is so cold and icy, that there are very few who dare to look upon it without a secret terror. And then, Eternity is so fearful, and so dark! Ah no! it is impossible you should be happy!

We may find, even among the writers of the *sentimental school*, many ideas confirmatory of that which we are endeavoring to establish. Werther, Ewen, Sautelet, Escousse, Lebras, Chatterton, are so ill satisfied in this world, that they take refuge in eternity. Childe Harold, Don Juan, Tsaffie, Frollo, Antony, Monte-Christo are all disgusted with life. Obermann, Aléko, Brulart, and Rousseau curse modern civilisation. It may be interesting, in order to judge of the tendencies of the sentimental school, to read the last conversation of Ewen and Theresa in Eugene Sue's *Theresa Dunoyer*: "If you desire to write to any one . . . ., there is time, said Ewen. Silence is the worthier course, replied Theresa. True. . . . As for me, when I pressed the hand of the Abbé de Kerouellan, I bade him farewell from the bottom of my heart. My friend, how far is it by sea, from here to the point of Kergal? Two leagues. And this wind . . . . is against the passage thither? With this wind no pilot would dare the voyage. He would certainly perish. Then M. de Ker-Ellio adds with a solemn tone: You have reflected, Theresa? I have reflected. You

wish it? I do. I am wrong in consenting to it. This resolution is common to us both, my friend . . . Which of us first proposed it? . . . It would be difficult to say. . . . Your share in it, is having chosen the anniversary of our marriage for . . . —For our deliverance, Theresa. . . Have I done ill? Oh no! . . . But you, have you reflected . . . Have you decided? I wish it were to-morrow. . . . Sometimes only . . . an idea . . .—What idea? Suicide incurs eternal punishment. We do not kill ourselves, my friend, Mor-Nader (a crazy old pilot, who passes for a sorcerer) proposes a sea excursion . . . we accept. . . . That is true. We shall leave to casuists an interesting question for discussion, said Ewen, smiling sadly. Our burden is too heavy, on the passage we *throw it aside*, that is all! Whom do we injure, Ewen? No one.—No one, Theresa. You generously gave me your hand to advance the prospects of that poor child, who is no more; I have loved you . . . I love you now, as the most tender of brothers. . . . and yet, what has our life been?—*Miserable, oh! most miserable.* . . . Friendship has not sufficed to console us. I feel now as deeply as ever the desertion of the man to whom I sacrificed everything. . . . He was infamous, yet I cannot forget him. . . .You love me ever, and notwithstanding your admirable devotion, I can never feel for you more than friendship.

. . . *It is the will of fate.* . . . . What are we to do? That which we are about to do, Theresa! That unfortunate child bound you to life. . . . through you, it bound me also; its death has crushed *our last hope.* . . . O weakness of our nature! We have not sufficient courage to accept our position, to offer our grief to God, and to continue our sad life, supported by one another. *Why live?* answered Theresa. You can no more renounce your love for me, than I can forget that man; our strength has failed, *the struggle crushes us, let us go!!!*"

But our conclusion finds its most brilliant examples in the writings of George Sand, the most eloquent, as well as the most logical interpreter of the system of Rousseau. Is Indiana happy? She has however reached the final limits of independence in the passions and the heart, since she has, with violence, broken the most sacred bonds. Is Valentine happy? Yet has she, to serve her love, crushed in her path all the *idle prejudices* of the world. Is Magnus happy? But has he not trampled under foot, in the service of his passion, all that is deemed holy among men? And Trenmor, does he know what happiness is? Yet what has he not braved? Juliette, Horace, Jaques, are they content with fate? In every page of these books, where reigns a corruption so deep, that we are more surprised

than indignant at finding a woman express, without blushing, such revolting imaginations; in every page, is found a feeling of unconquerable sadness. It seems as if the author, penetrated to the depths of the soul by the weariness of the passions and their total disgust, can no longer speak in any tones, but those bereft of meekness and consolation. In *Indiana*, Sir Adolphus Brown prepares Indiana for suicide, by expounding to her a strange theory, which he terminates in these words: "The baptism of sorrow has sufficiently purified our souls; let us render them to Him who gave them." Elsewhere in the same author, we read these significant words: "When the life of a man becomes hurtful to others, burdensome to himself, and useless to all, suicide is a legitimate act, which he may accomplish, if not without regret at having lived in vain, at least *without remorse* for having put an end to his existence." —(George Sand, *Jaques.*) Some time before his self-murder, Sautelet wrote to one of his friends: "Thou dost not know the *wicked thought* which has just entered my mind! It is a desire of blowing out my brains, in order to terminate my doubts. If within a year or two, life *does not become clear to me*, I will put an end to it."—(See Sainte-Beuve's *Portraits Contemporains.)* Bourdaloue, with his usual penetration, thus explains the mysterious causes of this incurable grief:

"There is no sin," says he, "which more readily exposes the sinner to the temptation of despair. St. Paul tells us: *Desperantes semetipsos tradiderunt impudicitiæ.* I conjure you, my brethren, says he to the Ephesians, not to live as those who, despairing, have given themselves up to the working of all uncleanness: *In operationem immunditiæ omnis.* For the most ordinary effect of impurity is, to ruin the whole edifice of grace in the soul, overthrowing even the foundation, which is Christian Hope. But again, asks St. Chrysostom, of what, and of whom, does the licentious man despair? He despairs, rejoins the same holy doctor, of his conversion, he despairs of his perseverance, he despairs of the pardon of his sins; and even should his crimes be pardoned, he despairs of his own will, he despairs of God and of himself. Can there be a more afflicting and melancholy end? He despairs of his conversion; for what are the means, he says to himself, or rather the spirit of impurity causes him to say, what are the means by which I may break my chains; how am I to tear from my heart a passion, which makes the whole pleasure of my life; how can I renounce, in good faith, that to which, in still better faith, I am most strongly bound? Were I to say I desire so to do, would I not lie to the Holy Ghost? And if I have not strength enough firmly to resolve, and

firmly to will, am I not the most unfortunate and God-forsaken of men? Even suppose he be converted, he despairs of his perseverance; for what can I hope from myself, continues he, after so many follies and changes? If I say this very day to God, that I will arise from my misery, and that the resolution I have formed shall be lasting, will having thus thought and expressed myself, place me in any more fitting state for carrying it into execution? Have I not a thousand times made the same resolution, and a thousand times have I not again found myself the same I was before? Why think that my present resolutions will be more durable? And why flatter myself that I will no longer be a reed shaken by the wind, trembling and bending at the breath of the lightest zephyr? By so willing, by so promising, will my nature be changed? Will my inclinations be different? Will I receive greater assistance; will the remedies granted me be more efficacious than those I have so often rendered useless?

"Finally he despairs both of God and of himself: of God, because He is a God of Holiness, who can neither approve nor suffer evil; of himself, because being, as St. Paul says, sold under sin, *Venumdatus sub peccato*, he can no longer love virtue; of God, because he has so often abused His patience and

mercy; of himself, because he has the liveliest conviction of his own instability and inconstancy; finally of God and of himself, because he sees between God and himself infinite contradictions, which he believes he will never be able to reconcile, and which incline him to deliver himself to the desires of his heart: *Desperantes semetipsos tradiderunt impudicitiæ.*"

It is not then wise to listen to the inclinations of the heart, and to throw aside all the sacred traditions of order and duty! God has no need of our love and our desires; but we, poor, miserable creatures, we cannot dispense with His paternal care. If we abandon Him, He leaves us to our own sadness, as to the worst of punishments; He leaves us to the agitations of our mind and heart, to the bitter feeling of our own helplessness, to wretchedness and sorrow. Happy are we if in this profound abyss, we recognise the hand that strikes us; if, instead of insulting Heaven, like Goethe and Voltaire, we acknowledge, with Silvio Pellico, eternal justice, and sacred truth!

But it may be asked: "Does virtue preserve from the rendings of the heart? Do we not constantly see minds, even in the bosom of Christianity, consumed by an unconquerable melancholy? Must not painful sacrifices be made, in plucking out the eye

that scandalises, and in cutting off the hand that is an obstacle to our salvation? Did not St. Paul mourn with deep anguish over the agitations of his heart? Does not Bossuet speak of an invincible ennui, which torments humanity? Does not the Church herself, represent her children weeping and mourning in this valley of tears? Do not the Scriptures teach, that every creature groaneth and travaileth in pain, and that the sons of Adam are bowed under a heavy yoke? Why then reproach sensuality with this universal sadness, this cry of distress, which bursts forth from all hearts?"

I can very well conceive, that superficial minds should be forcibly struck by an analogy, which disappears, as soon as we survey the realities of things, with the scrutinising glance of close observation. As there are two kinds of joy, so are there two kinds of sadness; the joy of worldly souls filled with licence and sensuality endeavors to forget, through the intoxication of the passions, the incurable miseries of existence; but Christian joy is like that of Andromache, a smile mingled with tears. Do you think that this sadness, which is blended in our hearts with all the pleasures of life, can ever throw us into that violent despair, which follows in the train of the passions? Do you fancy that the tears which, like the gentle dews of Heaven, fall from our

eyes, resemble those tears of blood which sensuality forces from yours? We are sad, it is true, because we know that our souls are here in a state of exile, and we are consumed by an intense desire of beholding the well beloved abode of eternal peace and liberty. We are sad, because we feel that the science of this world can never satisfy the insatiable longings of our spirit. We are sad, because the affection of no creature can ever fill the immeasurable depths of our being. Our intellect, enlightened and expanded by our Faith, teaches us to appreciate at their just value, the honors and pleasures of that world in which you find your only consolation. We cannot retain that power of illusion which sometimes lulls you to sleep upon the very brink of the abyss. We can never lean on the broken reed of human affections, because we have too deeply penetrated into the mysteries of human nature; but we have a support and a hope which render endurable that utter loneliness of heart and mind, which we must all bear during life. However, if we cannot find on earth a happiness which belongs only to Heaven, at least we are of all the exiled creatures in this world, the least suffering and despairing. The melancholy of sensual souls is like that of the dark days of winter, whose clouds are impenetrable to the sunbeams. Our's is like those lovely autumn days, when the

first shadows of the rainy season are mingled with the last glories of departing summer. We are enveloped, as well as you, in the night of this world, which surrounds and oppresses us; but while you bend your disconsolate brows towards the earth, we raise our eyes to Heaven, to catch the first rays of that light which is never to be extinguished.

CHAPTER III.

ANARCHY OF THE HEART.

OVERFLOWING SENSIBILITIES, WHICH ARE WASTED IN THE DESERT!—(*Sainte-Beuve.*)

There is something rigid and severe in the exterior forms of the Gospel, which gives offence to feeble minds. Its maxims of self-sacrifice and abnegation, and that cross which we must bear, are apparently sad and oppressive. Does it not seem as if Christ had no desire of alluring human nature, nor of winning conviction by gilded promises? It is the character of the true religion to represent things as they are, and to impose, without shrinking or tergiversation, the serious law of necessary duties. Christianity therein differs from all other systems: it enunciates obligations before rights. However, we must not think it has done nothing for the happiness of man, even during his fleeting days on earth. There is so sweet and calm a feeling in the fulfilment of duty; there is a peace so true and lasting, in passions overcome, that Christ could say with

truth, even after all the severe requisitions of the law: "My yoke is sweet, and my burden light."

The Rationalists, on the contrary, come to us with both hands full of an assured felicity. They paint with bitter disdain the mournful austerity of the Gospel;* they announce to us finally, those lovely days beaming with that sweet happiness after which

---

* M. Eugene Sue, in the "Wandering Jew," gives from the point of view indicated by us, a curious picture of Catholic morality, which he places in the mouth of the priest Gabriel: "Blasphemy! impiety! . . . to dare to sanctify sloth, isolation, distrust of everything, since there is nothing divine in the world, except holy labor, the holy love of our brethren, and holy communion with them! Sacrilege!!! to dare to say that a Father of infinite goodness can rejoice in the pains of His children! . . . Some few have seized upon the common inheritance by cunning, or by force . . . and it is that which afflicts God. Ah yes! if He suffers, it is to see to what a deplorable fate, innumerable masses of His creatures have devoted themselves, in order to satisfy the cruel selfishness of a few. Thus oppressors in all ages and countries, daring to make God their accomplice, have ever united in proclaiming in His name, this frightful maxim:—Man is born to suffer . . . his pangs and humiliations are agreeable to God . . . Yes, they have so declared; so that the more severe, humiliating, and painful, the condition of the creature whom they imposed upon, the more tears and blood were shed by the unfortunate being, the more, according to these homicides, was the Lord pleased and glorified . . ."—(Eugene Sue, "Wandering Jew.")

every mind and heart sighs.† How many young and inexperienced souls have we not seen, perilling their whole future in those dangerous paths, seduced by fleeting dreams which they pursue in vain, even to the grave? You, as well as I, have seen poor erring souls throw off the restraints of the law, perhaps for ever, in order to listen in peace to the thousand desires, the thousand passions, which fiercely struggle in their hearts. I have sometimes followed with saddened gaze, joyful sailors embarking on the perfidious ocean. They only thought of the pleasures of the voyage, of the novelties of distant countries, and of the gold they should bring home with them.—But the faithless waves, the hidden

† We may find a very curious example of the high-sounding promises of Rationalism, in Henry Heine, "Germany, I." But this writer, fanatical as he is, would blush at the foolish promises and the scandalous lures, offered by the school of Fourier. The learned author of the "Manual of Modern History," brands with courageous eloquence those revolting eccentricities: "Devotion, doubtless, is no vain word; it exists now, as formerly, and we are convinced it will ever live in France; but it is because France will reject Fourierism. Fourier builds only upon an unbounded selfishness, and offers its most odious type, in the very ideal of his model society. Only imagine a society, where the only aim is the gratification of the passions; where the number of inhabitants is reduced to six hundred to the square league, in order that the remainder may

rocks, and Death, so fearful amid the tempest! Thus have I often, in imagination, accompanied on the stormy waves of life, young hearts which, with a smile on the lips, made their entrance into the world. They too, only thought of crowning themselves with roses, and of gaily passing those years called by the poet, fugitive:

> "Eheu! fugaces, Posthume, Posthume,
> Labuntur anni."—(HORACE.)

What would be their response, were I now permitted to arrest their rapid course, and ask them, what they have accomplished; what truths they have acquired; what services they have rendered to Humanity; what virtues they have prepared for the dark days of old age?

---

more amply enjoy themselves; where the reason of all is only employed in refining pleasures; where gluttony is a virtue, and where each one daily consumes *a quantity of nourishment, equal to the twelfth part of his own weight*," etc. . . .; where two-thirds of the women are professed prostitutes, and where all have the like morality, etc. . . .; and where the most depraved tastes, in every species of passion, find full satisfaction! Such is the ideal of Fourierism, such is the proposed realisation of the Kingdom of God on Earth!!!"—(OTT, "Revue Nationale," Dec. 1847.) It would not be difficult to prove by numerous facts, that M. Ott's assertions are by no means exaggerated, but we can no more relate these shameful ideas, than dwell upon the excesses of Greco-Roman Paganism. (See Fourier, "Œuvres completes.")

Let the heart of man live on, in all its reckless independence, and soon will the spirit be destroyed. It is a vain and hollow dream, to believe that we can rule our hearts according to our will, like fragile reeds yielding to the lightest pressure. Sensibility is so powerful in our moral organisation, that it seizes on and crushes us, if we give it a moment's freedom. The abyss lures us. The young man, at the beginning of life, thinks he may abandon himself to pleasure, and at the same time preserve the independence of his heart and mind; but soon he perceives with discouragement that his enfeebled understanding is a mere slave, and has ceased to rule. He then finds new ideas continually entering his mind; he yields, at first through weakness, but at length systematically and as if through conviction. St. Augustine admirably describes the fatal progress which young minds rapidly make in the pathways of evil:

"What I wished, what I desired, was to love and to be loved, I could not be satisfied with friendship; my heart asked for more. There arose from the depths of my concupiscence I know not what vapors and mists of youth, which troubled my whole soul, and made me confound the blindness of passion, with the pure happiness of affection Then marriage should have been conceded, as a dike to the

torrent of my age; but my father was much more troubled concerning my eloquence, than my morals; my success as a rhetorician, than my conduct as a young man. . . . In vain did my mother dissuade me from sin; her words seemed to me those of a simple woman, and I blushed to obey. More; I was ashamed among my comrades of being less vicious than they; and when I heard them boast of their excesses, and saw them proud and applauded in proportion to their libertinism, I too, hastened to sin, less through pleasure than vanity. Ordinarily, censure follows vice; I sought vice to avoid censure; and as at every cost I wished to equal my comrades, I even feigned sins which I had not committed, in order to gain a little of their pernicious esteem. . ." *

But the evil does not end there; it continually increases, like an eating and destroying cancer. We feel here under the necessity of quoting an orator who has painted the frightful degradation of a corrupt heart, with a depth and eloquence, in my opinion, never equalled:

"The sense of which I speak," says Father Lacordaire, "is not only rebellious, but depraved. I call that sense depraved, which does not confine itself to its true functions, but which acts through an in-

* Augustine, "Confessions," Book II, chap. 2 and 3

stinct of egotism, foreign to any end. It is evident that such a condition must arise from a corruption of the natural order, because nature always works for a just, determinate, and efficacious purpose. Now, the sense of which I speak, is not concerned for any end; its end is altogether foreign to it. What it seeks is itself, is a satisfaction independent of any good effect, whose utility and sanctity might justify it. While all the senses work in harmony with life, even when they misuse it; while sleep refreshes, nourishment strengthens, and our ears hear the words spoken by the voice; in short, while all our other senses, even in their excesses, accomplish something real, that one continually conspires against our life. It consumes, without fruit, our most precious organs, and destroys, without any result, our most admirable faculties. Have you not met men, who, in the bloom of life, scarcely honored yet by the signs of manhood, already bear the marks of time; who, degenerate before having reached the perfection of their being, their foreheads furrowed by untimely wrinkles, and their lips incapable of expressing goodness, drag on a decrepit existence, even in the fairest days of youth? What has caused this living death? What has stricken this youth? What has deprived him of the freshness of his years? What has graven centuries of shame upon his face?

Is it not that sense, the enemy to human life? The victim of his own depravity, the unhappy one has lived alone, only aspiring to selfish agitations, to those fearful pulsations from which man and Heaven turn their eyes; and now behold him! Drunk with the wine of death, and followed by contempt, he bears his body to the tomb, where his vices will sleep with him, and dishonor his ashes to the end of time. Ah! if that be not a depraved sense, what name shall we give to it? A still more bitter name; for I add, that it is an abject sense. It is an abject sense, because it kills the heart, and substitutes the excitement of the blood, for the emotions of the soul. During my life, I have seen many young men, and I assure you, I have never found tenderness of heart in a dissolute young man; I have never found any loving souls but those that were either ignorant of, or engaged in a constant struggle with, evil. Indeed, once habituated to violent emotions, how can the heart, that delicate plant, nourished by a few drops of dew falling from Heaven, which the lightest breezes disturb, which can be happy for days through the remembrance of a word, a look, a little encouragement given by the lips of a mother, or the pressure of a friendly hand; the heart, whose beating is so calm in a true nature, almost insensible, because of its very sensibility, and fearing lest a

single drop of love might shatter it, had God made it less capricious,—how, I say, can the heart oppose its gentle and fragile enjoyment, to the gross and exaggerated pleasures of the depraved sense. The one is selfish, the other generous: one lives for itself, the other, out of itself: of two tendencies, one must prevail: if the depraved sense conquer, the heart withers little by little, it can no longer feel the delight of simple joys; it lives no more for others, and ends by beating only that the blood may circulate, and to mark the flight of that shameful time whose progress is hastened by debauch. But what can be more abject than to destroy the heart of a man within him? What is left him if his heart be dead? Yet does the depraved sense still more; the effects of no vice as of no virtue can be confined to a single individual; both have in society their action and reaction; and in this view, the depraved sense is the disgrace and ruin of the world."*

The excesses of the passions cause then a profound deterioration of the whole spiritual being, which continually increases as the grosser affections acquire the ascendency. The remembrance of God, which to frail and dependent beings should be so

* Lacordaire, "Conferences de Notre-Dame," II, 39-42.

natural, becomes only a strange and importunate idea.

"As this conduct," as Bourdaloue admirably remarks, "cannot harmonise with the knowledge of a God (for, how can we know God and be ignorant of what will offend Him), so, from forgetfulness of himself and from ignorance of his sin, the sensual man falls into ignorance and forgetfulness of God; behold the depth of the abyss wherein impurity plunges him.

"Thence is it, said the learned Pico of Mirandola, that in all times, Atheists have been notorious as men corrupted by carnal pleasures; Atheism, as that great man remarks, not being the cause of impurity, but impurity being the usual course which leads to Atheism. Thence is it that the impure by profession, are ordinarily corrupt and libertine in matters of belief; they are easily prejudiced against religion, they love to dispute it, to find difficulties, and care not to seek the solutions; scarcely can even a corrupt and worldly woman be found, who does not pique herself upon the strength of her mind, and of her reasonings on the truths of Christianity. Why? Because she would willingly persuade herself, by reasoning, that there is no God, according to that fine saying of St. Augustine's, that none doubt the existence of God, save those to whom such

an existence would be very inexpedient. Thence is it, that the progress of impiety always follows that of vice, and that, on the other hand, the return from impiety to faith, rarely commences in a soul, but by the return from vice to virtue, that is to say, when the flame of impure desires is extinguished. The reason of all this is very simple; for the sensual man, finding it impossible to believe and at the same time to satisfy himself, the vision of a God troubling him amid his pleasures, and those pleasures being constantly reproved by the vision of a God, he finally concludes to renounce the one, in order to continue in possession of the other, and no longer to believe in that God, whom he regards as the irreconcilable enemy of his pleasures and excesses."*

The soul becomes hardened in the midst of this misery and shame, and turns away her eyes from Heaven, as if that sweet and consoling thought had become baneful and odious. Filled with antipathy for all that recalls eternity, she falls into a scepticism, sometimes assumed, but always profound. God is still named, but always with a secret irony. The sensualist, ruled by his passions, becomes incredulous, not only with regard to revealed religion,

* Bourdaloue, "Lent," Sermon on Impurity.

but also generally, with respect to (what is called) natural religion. He would think himself truly unwise in accepting the vain teachings of philosophers, when he rejects those of the Gospel. He sees no reason for receiving laws from Kant or Hegel, since he refuses those of Jesus Christ. Does he not express great contempt for those sages, who, through a foolish pride, renounce the gratifications of the present life, without ever striving for the eternal? Should Heaven blast him with lightning, he, like Don Juan, would defy it even in dying. He regards all that passes the bounds of his senses as a vain chimera; he considers all that does not lead to pleasure as a cheat.

Perhaps you may think I exaggerate. Listen then: "Joseph Delorme then took a lodging in his old quarter, and confining himself more closely than ever, only went out after nightfall. Then did he deliberately begin and pursue, without relaxation, his slow but sure suicide; nothing but alternate fits of prostration and frenzy, accompanied from time to time by cries or sighs; no more regular and serious study; only, occasionally, a short indulgence in that exciting reading, which melts or burns the soul.

"At this time, reason had lost all control over the mind of the unhappy Joseph. To use the very ex-

pressions of his journal, the bare rock to which he had so long clung, had given way beneath his grasp, and had left him on the shifting sands, at the mercy of the waves. No PRECEPT OF LIFE, NO PRINCIPLE OF MORALITY, REMAINED IN THIS SOUL, except a few broken fragments scattered here and there, which crumbled at his touch. At least, had reason in forsaking him delivered him hopelessly up to the wanderings of a frenzied sensibility, he might have been stunned by the violence of real insanity, and the intoxication of delirium have spared him the knowledge of the wounds inflicted by his fall; but it seemed as if a capricious executioner had bound the body of his victim with a cord, which occasionally held him back, so that he might only fall by degrees. His extinct reason hovered round him like a phantom, and accompanied him to the abyss, upon which it threw a dismal glare. This is what he himself, with fearful energy, called: 'To be drowned with the lantern round one's neck.' In a word, Joseph's soul presented thenceforth only an *inconceivable chaos*, where *monstrous imaginations*, vivid memories, *wicked fancies*, great thoughts in ruins, wise foresights followed by foolish actions, and emotions of piety *following blasphemy*, sported and jostled each other on a background of *despair*."*

* See Sainte-Beuve, "Poems," Life of Joseph Delorme.

Neither does the author of the *Orientales* dissimulate the profound cause of the scepticism of the children of the present age:

"O sweet and noble Lady, mourn our age!
A picture dark presents the heart of man.
A serpent in the water's source we scan,
And Doubt, its war within our souls, doth wage.

A mocking smile thy lips doth never part,
O'er any grief that in our spirit's seen;
O thou, who liv'st retired and serene,
In mind a man, but woman through thy heart.

If thou, the Muse, shouldst ask from me, the Poet,
Whence comes the dream that saddens all my days;—
That darkens o'er my brow; and why always,
Like tossing branches, is my soul unquiet?

Why seek I from the murmuring winds, or wild
Or soft, an answer; and before the break
Of earliest dawn all unrefreshed I wake,
Before the birds, or e'en the happy child?

And when the veil of darkness hath been rent,
Why wander I, as one pursued by fate,
Within the vale, and sadly contemplate
The flowery turf, or heaven star-besprent?

I'd tell thee, that within me still abides
A foe, pale Doubt, which drives me to the glade,
A spectre blind and deaf, compound of shade
And light, that all, at once half shows, half hides.

I'd tell thee that I question evermore,
An instinct stammering, prisoned in the sense,
Besieging faith, with doubts that will not hence;
The sneering mind, so near the weeping heart.

Thou hearest oft the murm'ring word half spoken,
And, like a starving beggar, old and poor,
Who dreams, low bowed, beside the closed door,
I seem as waiting one who ne'er will open.

O Doubt! in lines of flame, on Nature's scroll
I see thee traced, upon the very sky
That, with its mystic blue, unto the eye
Transparent seems, impervious to the soul.

To Passion's sons, is Doubt the special ill,
We ne'er can hope to reach thy calm sublime,
Whose life-barks, launched at an evil time,
On revolutions' waves are tossing still.

Those hideous vipers, superstitions, swarm
Beneath our brows, *where every germ is dead*,
We bear within our hearts the *corpse decayed*
Of *Faith*, that in our fathers lived so warm."*

In Germany, the sentimental theory excited passions still more profound, and a furious hatred of truth and virtue, which still threatens the civilised world with the most frightful consequences (1847):

"Speak to us no more," cries Hermann Puttmann, one of those fiery apostles of pleasure, "of

* Victor Hugo, "Chants du Crepuscule."

the wrath of God, of our own abasement, nor of anything thereto resembling. *Let us holily glorify man alone;* we desire nothing beyond him, no other life more glorious.

"Let liberty triumph! Human liberty alone, terrestrial, filled with life. Do not suffer a false imagination to degrade you, by despoiling you of the blessings of earth.

"Bend your knees no longer before phantoms; creep no more into sombre churches, O ye, with serene brows and noble souls! Why will you so cruelly torment yourselves?

"Truly is this fear, this trembling before a life we shall never live, a torment. A real torture is this continual aspiration towards a frenzy of penitence, impossible to be attained.

"*Truly ignominious is this languishing desire for Heaven*, this stupid contempt for the world, this fascination with death. . . .

"There is nothing beyond ourselves. *Let us open our hearts.* There will we find *the Paradise for which we were born:* happiness is, to live. Who is there bold enough to abandon himself to death?"

Louis Feuerbach is still more gross and audacious when he treats of God, and of the Christian Revelation. In the preface to his *Essence of Christianity*, he does not fear to call Christian piety, *an incu-*

rable syphilis of bigots; elsewhere, *an inexhaustible mine of lies, impostures, illusions, and insanity.* The existence of the Sovereign Being inspires him with the following execrable sarcasm:

"*Is he male or female, or perhaps hermaphrodite?*"

In his work entitled, *On Death and Immortality*, he celebrates in high-sounding verses, *the great and all-powerful negation.*

This fanatical school has its poets; and pray Heaven we be not soon called upon to groan beneath the yoke of its politicians! Among the apostles of negation we must not, above all, forget Herwegh. We will quote some lines of his, translated by Count d'Horrer. Here is a distich addressed to youth:

"Believe not and know not, but doubt and doubt ever,
Reject Faith and Hope, though thy heart-strings should sever."

Elsewhere he says:

"What if there be a God, and what if none?
What care I for this God, when life is done?
No clearness here responds to my desires,
And naught is true, but pleasure's glowing fires."

The German poet only repeats in his Epicurean verses, what the philosophers of the same school no less audaciously teach. After this can we be astonished to hear William Marr proclaim, "that the dogmas of the existence of a God and the immor-

tality of the soul, are only old wives tales, rejected by reason with scorn?" As a consequence to such principles, he cries out with savage frenzy: "*I desire great vices, bloody, colossal crimes. When shall I cease to see this trivial morality, this tiresome virtue?*"

Did not one of the proconsuls of Swiss radicalism most audaciously say that, "*The aristocracy of morality must be levelled!*"

"M. Carl Grun," says M. Anatole de Gallier, "is a representative of the extreme party, with all the consequences of their opinions; were it possible, he even outdoes them. He rejects with disdain all community of principles with the innovators of France and England, still imbued with religious and theological prejudices, and who, by a vicious circle, would infallibly lead us back to that which we already know, to that which we no longer need. (Certainly the accusation is not wanting in originality: Fourier, Robert Owen, and Saint-Simon become Capuchins and Jesuits!) As for him, he does not stop half way, but strikes into the very quick, and destroys all the veils behind which might be hidden any appearance of a Divine Being. He applauds the efforts towards negation of the Baron d'Holbach; he goes into the *blind-alley of Theism*, in search of the idea, and when found, he resolutely drives it out. God owes his name and attributes to

the human conscience. He is nothing but the *religious and philosophical ideal* which we bear within us, and which we so much the more readily comprehend, that it is *created by us* of our proper substance. God once destroyed, we are only half-way, the ground slides beneath our feet, and repose is impossible. We must make one more sacrifice to inexorable logic: that of morality, that superannuated and troublesome divinity. And then may the metaphysician unhesitatingly declare, *that evil is only the development of human activity*, and finally, *that life, with its sensual enjoyments, is the greatest of all blessings.*"

We penned these lines before the revolution of February, 1847. Since then, have not all the follies of German materialism been surpassed, even in France?

You see that if the plant be torn from the soil of its birth, furnished for its nourishment by Providence itself, it droops, and must perish when removed from its native skies. You cannot transplant the heather of the mountain to the plain; it would soon die. Man too must live in the atmosphere created for him by the Eternal; elsewhere, he degenerates, day by day. He was made for the pure and holy practice of duty; without it he cannot live his true life of intelligence and virtue. Without

this influence, he feels developing within him an infinity of contemptible inclinations, for which he ought to blush. He must have gold, not for the sake of the gold itself, but to increase the circle of his passions. He would like to have the power of buying souls and consciences, in order that he might govern them according to the will of his caprices.

It would give him such delight to hold within his hands a lever, which might lift the Earth. But should gold be wanting, perfidy will not always fail. He would be glad to resemble, through cunning, those great souls, who hold themselves above the vulgar prejudice, called *friendship*. There are, I believe, but few among corrupt souls, to whom these sacred bonds form any barrier. In almost all minds, pleasure produces selfishness; and selfishness, the most egregious errors.

No one can be more frank on this point than Alexander Dumas in his "*Antony*":—

"ADELE. But with such ideas, you believe neither in friendship, nor . . .

"THE VISCOUNTESS. Well! nor in love.

"ANTONY. In love! yes . . . in friendship, no . . . . *That is a spurious feeling, of which nature has no need*, a convention of society, adopted by the heart through egotism, wherein the soul is constantly cheated by the mind, and which is destroyed by the

first glance of a woman, or the smile of a Prince."

Bourdaloue well foresaw these fatal consequences when he said:

"Is it not truly surprising, to see how low man may be debased by this sin? For there is no interest he will not sacrifice, no honor he will not trample on, no dignity he will not prostitute, no fortune he will not risk, no friendship he will not violate, no reputation he will not peril, no ministry he will not profane, and no duties he will not neglect, in order to satisfy his passion. A father forgets his duty to his children, caring not whether he ruin them by his orgies; a judge, his duty to the public, making no scruples in sacrificing justice to his pleasures; a friend, his duty to his friend, thinking nothing of abusing his access into any house that he may dishonor it; a priest, his duty to Jesus Christ, fearing not to scandalise his sacred ministry by abominable deeds; a wife, what she owes to her husband, disregarding the faith she has sworn to him; a maiden, her duties to herself, no longer blushing at having lost her most beautiful ornament, and having rendered herself an object of scorn. If in each of these stations in life, men were to make this reflection: 'Who am I, and in what am I about to engage?' there is no one, however abandoned to the violence of his desires, that human reasons alone

would not be sufficient to restrain. But their eyes are bandaged; and while they are ruled by this passion, they know not what they are, nor what they are not, because the demon of impurity has blinded them, and deprived them of the most necessary of all visions, which is the vision of ourselves."—(BOURDALOUE, *Lent*, Sermon on Impurity.)

All the salutary laws which still restrain us, in societies which have remained almost Christian, finally end by deeply irritating those erring souls. I cannot think there are many in that condition, who truly desire a good social order.* Do they not call all authority, *tyranny*, all obligations, *slavery*, and all institutions, *prejudices*?

Open M. Alexandre Dumas' *Antony*, and what read you there?

"ADELE. Antony, the world has its laws, and society, its requirements . . . etc.

"ANTONY. And why should I accept them? . . . Not one of those who made them can boast of having spared me a pain, or of having rendered me a single service; no, thank Heaven, I have received nothing

---

* Rosmini has given an excellent and profound reason for it: "We can love no order, when we hate the order which should reign within us."—(Rosmini-Serbati, "Essai sur l'Esperance," Andre's translation, book I, § XVIII.)

from them but injustice, and owe them nothing but hate . . . *I should hate myself, were a man to force me to love him.*"

Afterwards when describing the violence of his love for Madame d'Hervey, who represents to him the solemn vows made at the holy altar, Antony exclaims:

"Oh! I must have either hatred or love,* Adele! I will have one or the other . . . If you desired an ordinary love, you should have been loved by a happy man! *Duties and virtue! vain words* . . . A murder would made you a widow . . . I can commit that murder; little care I whether my blood be shed by my own hand or by that of the executioner . . . It will bring reproach on no one, and the ground alone will be stained by it . . . Adele . . . I long for you, I must have you . . .—There is a crime between us . . .—So be it, I will commit it!"

I do not know that the independence of the heart produces uniformly, all these effects in corrupted

---

* It is easy to show that what Antony calls love, is nothing but a selfish and reckless madness. He himself confesses as much afterwards to Adele, who complains of the sufferings he has caused her:

"ANTONY. Oh! be silent, be silent! Thou didst fly . . . T'was I pursued thee; I had no pity on thy tears; no remorse for thy plaints; I have ruined thee, I am a wretch and a villain; I have dishonored thee, and can make no reparation."

souls. There are, doubtless, minds less consistent, less energetic and decided, who, through a kind of impotence, are arrested at the first steps into evil, and who live and die amid mere vulgar brutality. But in truly living organisations, passion never stops there. It hates really and deeply all religious or moral truth, which might restrain and confine it.

"There comes a time," says the most celebrated thinker of the present day in Italy, "when the obstinate attachment to an infamous pleasure of the senses or of pride, and the fantastical hope of finding a means to justify his passions, develop in such a manner as to absorb the whole man.

"From that fatal moment he no longer knows, sees, or loves aught, save those shameful gratifications, and that which relates to, or resembles them.

"He desires to indulge in them with his whole strength, and envies the enjoyments of others: thence jealousy, degrading excesses, hatred, and in short, total disorder.

"So soon as these habits have established their reign within the heart of man, they keep a vigilant watch that no elevated or spiritual thought enter their domain. For, if any principle connected with spiritual things, should find its way into the soul, it becomes, through the power of conscience, a scourge to all the guilty passions.

"It is then necessary that this decided love of vice, which rules and tyrannises over souls, should banish, as a mortal enemy, all that speaks of virtue. He who has a deep and sore ulcer, is so sensitive in the part affected by the disease, that a breath may occasion screams, and the simple contact of his garments, make him shudder. Now, such is the effect of a holy maxim on the lacerated soul of the unfortunate who seeks happiness in pleasure; with this difference however, that there is infinitely more energy in the faculties of the spirit, than in those of the body, already so strong. . . .

"That fury which is kindled in the soul of the wicked, when they hear a precept opposed to the affections which enslave them, is a singular fact, and one well worthy of claiming the attention of the philosopher, who makes a study of the human heart. For if it be understood, and its character well defined, there are many historical accounts which become entirely credible, however fabulous they may have before appeared.

"If in fact the strength of their powers of feeling be such as we have stated, their grief and rage will be the greater, in proportion as the truth presented, knocking at the gates of their soul, be clear and undeniable, and possessing consequently more force. Indignation and grief will reach their height,

when the truth is as clear as it can possibly be made."—(Rosmini, *Essai sur l'Esperance*, book I, § XXVI.)

It is vain to hope that these rebellious spirits will be governed by philanthropic wisdom, or by pedantic babbling. They will always comprehend that, having broken with Heaven, they are amenable to no power. The pretended defenders of society can never bind by their weak laws, those whom the Church has failed in restraining (1847). Thus see how many every day escape from their dominion, some by suicide, and others by open rebellion! The passions once unchained, no one can say where they will be arrested. Gentle words will not lull the lion to sleep. To unbridled hearts, there is a satisfaction in mere destruction. A pure and serene intelligence reposes in the midst of order, wisdom, and peace; but the spirit which disdains virtue, delights in anarchy, as in its proper element. It seems as if the confusion were in harmony with the agitation which consumes it. Like Childe Harold, it would rejoice in dashing with the waves, in howling with the tempest, and in roaring as the thunder. Such is Byron!

"Whate'er thou may'st be, Byron, genius good
Or ill, ...
. . . thy dwelling is the darksome night,

And horror, thy domain: the eagle, king
Of deserts, thus disdains the plain. Like thee,
He seeks alone the steep and rugged cliffs,
By Winter whitened, and by thunder riven,
The sterile shores, where bleach the ocean's wrecks,
Or fields all blackened by the battle's rage:
And while the bird, which singeth e'en in grief,
Upon the water's edge, amid the flowers,
Her nest doth build, to Athos' giddy heights
He sweeps, and hangs his eyrie o'er the abyss,
Suspended from the mountain's side, and there,
Along amid his victims' reeking limbs,
The rocks still dripping with their blackening gore,
He finds his pleasure in their cries of pain,
And, cradled by the tempest, sleeps in joy.
And thou, O Byron, like this brigand bird,
The saddest wailings of *despair* dost deem
Thy sweetest harmonies; a scenic play
Is evil unto thee, and man, thy victim.
Thine eye, like Satan's, measured the abyss;
Thy soul, there plunging far from God and day,
Hath bidden Hope eternally farewell!
And now, like him, thou reignest in deep darkness;
Thy genius, never dying, wildly swells
In funeral songs; it triumphs, and thy voice
Attuned to modes infernal, chants the hymn
Of glory, to the gloomy God of ill."*

---

* Lamartine, "First Meditations," Man.

Do you not find the same combats in the unquiet soul of Jean-Jaques? Have wilder storms ever been witnessed? What dark misanthropy! What antipathy to the whole of society! What disgust at civilisation! It was only natural that the author of the *Confessions*, should be also that of the *Discourse on Inequality;* that he should endeavor to overthrow that society which had so confined him. In such natures there is never any medium in passion; they are never arrested by those grains of sand, called by politicians, mountains. You labor in vain; they will always require something, which may hold to them the place of devotion and virtue; something, which may raise them above the stagnating level of a worldly life. Christianity fully understood such natures, and had prepared for their occupation and satisfaction, boundless sacrifices and infinite love. Christianity made of those burning souls, Augustines, Jeromes, Loyolas, and Francis Xaviers. But you have desired neither sacrifices nor devotion.* You have preached to man the devotion to his own happiness; and now those spirits

* "Man," as M. Saint-Marc Girardin admirably remarks, "creates nothing, except through devotion and sacrifice."—(Saint-Marc Girardin, "Essais," la Thebaide.) Now the present century has declared the devotion of the Catholic Church unlawful. Hear how

created for the highest and noblest destinies, turn against you that activity which consumes them. The fatal day that is to decide on the life and death of French society, may be near at hand (1847)! But hear you not already ominous words resounding, and see you not swords and poignards flashing through the gloom?

---

the Rev. P. Lacordaire makes the men of our age speak, in his admirable "Memorial on the Re-establishment of the Preaching Friars": "It is true, all that with which you reproach us, is the height of injustice, and tends undeniably to social disorganisation. But we are inimical to your religious doctrine; it is too powerful for us to combat with equal arms. You draw from your faith such an entire abnegation of yourselves, that we, men of the world, married, ambitious, incapable of any future, because we are stifled by the present, we cannot dispute the vantage ground with you. However since we hate, we must conquer you. We will not use fire and sword against you; but by law, we will place you outside the law; we will cause your devotion to be regarded as a dangerous privilege, from which the State must be freed by ostracism; you shall be without liberty, because by your virtues you are beyond equality."—(Lacordaire, "Memorial," in the "Life of St. Dominic," 29.)

CHAPTER IV.

SENSUALITY AT THE TRIBUNAL OF THE PASSIONS.

AN IMAGINARY AND IDOLIZED GOOD IS DECKED BY THE FANCY WITH AS MANY EMBELLISHMENTS AS THE OBJECT OF LOVE.—(*Rosmini.*)

In the reflections we have just made, there is more than one thought worthy of the profound consideration of serious minds. That vice to which Christianity with great philosophical truth has given the name of *impurity*, the poets call *love*. The moralists of the nineteenth century, much more indulgent to certain passions than we ought to be, have for some excesses a peculiar language, and a distinct set of ideas. The present epoch, which is entirely imaginative, is deeply penetrated, with regard to this subject, by the spirit of pagan poetry. Has not an attempt been made, to consider this love as the source of all the great movements of the soul? Has it not been regarded as a true revelation of the Holy and the Beautiful? Do we not daily hear that it is love which preserves devotion with self-sacrifice within our hearts? Many are tormented

by the fear of seeing man's nature maimed, as soon as any attempt is made to direct the tumultuous feelings which struggle in the depths of his being. *Mysticism* is accused of launching an anathema against human nature, and of uprooting, with a cruel and unrelenting hand, those sentiments which should win the respect of all.

These apologies are not new; they have all been made before, and during the most distinguished periods of Catholicity:

"Man," says Bourdaloue, "will no longer regard his passion except as a pardonable weakness, incident to humanity; he will no longer feel any remorse, he will consider it as a mere gallantry, as a subject for self-gratulation, applause, and triumph: for, as William of Paris remarks in his admirable treatise on this matter, such is the progress of impurity. But could it ever have been believed, had it not been proved by the depravity of the age, that there are men in the world, yes, in the Christian world, sufficiently perverted to call a crime of such magnitude by the simple name of gallantry? Had pagans and idolators so expressed themselves, it would scandalise our religion to hold such language in imitation of their example. But the most dissolute among the pagans and idolators, had on this point more modesty than we: we see men professing

faith in the Gospel, and yet keeping no measure, without decency or modesty in their expressions, placing amid their *conquests* the most criminal connections, and boasting openly of their deeds, frequently even of what they have not done: Ah! my brethren, said St. Chrysostom, it is a blindness worse than that of the demons. But what shall we say of Christian women who accustom themselves to similar discourses, regard them as a pastime and diversion, love their raillery and equivoque, take pleasure in understanding them, or show only a false repugnance, with an air which, far from putting an end to license, excites, and renders it more bold?"—(BOURDALOUE, *Lent*, Sermon on Impurity.)

"Does not even immodesty," adds Bossuet, "that is to say, shame itself, called brutality when it runs into open debauch, walk with upright head, when covered with a slight veil of fidelity, discretion, mildness, and perseverance? Does it not seem worthy of heroes? Does it not lose its very name of immodesty, to take that of gallantry; and have we not seen the polite world treat those who have not entered into such liasons, as savages and rustics? It is then true, Christians, that the least mixture of false virtue can reconcile honor with vice. And this does not require much effort; the least mixture suffices, the lightest coloring of deceptive and hypo-

critical virtue imposes on the eyes of the world. They who are no connoisseurs in precious stones, are duped and cheated by the least glare; and the world is so little acquainted with real virtue, that it is often dazzled by its mere appearance. Thence is it, that among men there is rarely question of avoiding vice; the only effort is, to find specious names, and honorable virtues."—(BOSSUET, *Lent*, Sermon on Honor.)

But the religion of Christ, which is widely severed from pagan impurities, will eternally oppose every passionate tendency which might overrule the holy law of duty. However, when we examine Christian principles closely and seriously, they agree wonderfully, in my opinion, with the results of a sound philosophy. Whence is the poetical and ideal grandeur which has been lent to sensuality? May not the other vices also claim their share? Alas! poetry is but too often the echo of an impassioned soul, and it is more easy to embellish frailty, than to overcome it! Poor human nature! always ready to crown its chains with roses, to bend before the idol, and to die for it! Do you not find that a sanguinary ambition has also its grand and poetical aspect? You know well that the human race forgets all the iniquities of pride, all the offences of despotism, all the blood drawn from its veins, and suffers itself to be

dazzled by the glory of battles. No passion is too mean or miserable to become heroic and sublime, in dramas,* or romances. Thus, in *Lelia*, is Trenmor, the *gamester*, transformed into an heroic personage: "Trenmor," as M. de Milly remarks, "is the gentleman of the book, the *great man*, the *man of power*."—(A. DE MILLY, *Revue des Romans*, I; GEORGE SAND, *Lelia*.) In the *Pere Goriot*, a daring villain makes the most open pretensions to greatness and deep wisdom. He attempts to crush *vulgar* ideas, by the weight of his *logic* and *experience*. He resembles, in some respects, the 'Trenmor' of *Lelia*, the 'Brulart' of *Atar-Gull*, and the 'Tsaffie' of *The Salamander*. Listen to Vautrin! "Do you know how men make their way in the world? By brilliancy of genius, or by dexterity of corruption. This mass of men must be entered as a cannon ball, or we must creep among them like the plague. Honesty is good for nothing; men bend beneath the power of genius, they hate and endeavor to calumniate it, because it takes without sharing; but they yeild it to if it perseveres! In short, they adore genius on their knees, or else trample it in the mire.

---

* We will return to the consideration of this point, when we examine the question of scenic representations, in a book entitled, *Distractions and Prejudices of the World*.

Corruption abounds, because talent is rare. Thus corruption being the weapon of mediocrity which abounds, you will feel its point everywhere, etc. . . Thus is the honest man, the common enemy. But what do you take the honest man to be? In Paris, the honest man is he who is quiet, and refuses to divide. I will say nothing of those poor Helots who everywhere labor without receiving any recompense, and whom I call, the *holy confraternity of God's ragged laborers.* Assuredly, you find virtue among them in the full bloom of its folly; but you find there too its misery. I can see now the grimaces of those excellent people, should God play us the trick of absenting himself from the Last Judgment.

"So if you desire a sudden fortune, you must either be already rich, or appear so. To become rich, we must venture a bold game; otherwise we will be forced to play low, and your humble servant! If in the hundred professions you may embrace, there be ten men who succeed rapidly, the public calls them, robbers. Draw your own conclusions; such is life! It is no more lovely than the kitchen, its perfume is as disagreeable, and if you put your fingers into the frying-pan, you will certainly soil your hands; only learn how to wash your face well; therein lies all the morality of your age. If I speak to you thus of the world, it has given me the right;

I know it. Do you think I blame it? Not at all. It has always been thus, and the moralists will never change it. Man is not perfect, he is sometimes more and sometimes less of a hypocrite; and then the simpletons say, he has no morality. I do not accuse the rich at the expense of the people; man is the same whether high, low, or in the middle station. In every million of these reasoning herds, there are ten leaders who hold themselves above everything, even above the laws; I am one. If you are a superior genius, you may go in a straight line, with your head upright."—(De Balzac, *le Pere Goriot.*)

'Vautrin," says the spirited author of the *Etudes, Critiques*, "proves with geometrical precision, that in point of honesty, society is inferior to the prisons; that thieves ought to shun the world for fear of forming evil connections, and courtesans, lest they should see things which might offend their modesty. Every rich man is a miser; every great lady a degraded woman; every author a trader in thought, and every statesman an intriguing politician. The world is composed of robbers, externally gilded, and of courtesans, perfumed with grace and fashion. Such is, with a few brilliant but rare exceptions, the basis of the romances of M. de Balsac, which wit and talent render but the more dangerous. In this new course of morals, we find maxims such as these: 'There

are no principles, there are only events; there are no laws, there are only circumstances, and the superior man embraces them, to guide them;' finally this last: 'You will find in me those deep abysses, those vast concentrated feelings, that simpletons call vices.' Thus speaks Vautrin, the supereminent logician, the superior mind, the admirable and admired man. He rules and governs wherever he may be; he does not always succeed, for what general is ever sure of winning all the battles he may fight? Vautrin, the robber, who has a man put to death, in order to increase the wealth of an heiress, upon whose portion he is to have a large sum; Vautrin, the murderer, who takes from time to time his winter quarters in the galleys, is simply a Napoleon, couched beneath his column, instead of standing upon it He is a galley-slave, because he was not an emperor."—(NETTEMENT, *Etudes critiques sur le feuilleton-roman*, I, Memoires du Diable.)

Alas! this disorder is far from being a novelty! "If a slight shade of virtue be mingled with vice," says again Bossuet, "it may appear with honor in the world, without much attempt at concealment, and almost without any restraint. For instance, can anything be more unjust than to shed human blood for private injuries, and with one blow to tear a citizen from his country, a servant from his king, a

child from the Church, and a soul, purchased with His own blood, from God? And yet since men have associated an idea of virtue with these bloody deeds, honor has so obstinately clung to them, that neither the anathemas of the Church, the severe laws and inflexible firmness of the Prince, nor the rigid justice of an avenging God, have been strong enough to succeed in effecting a separation. Nothing is more odious than extortion and peculation; and yet, they who have employed them in order to indulge in expenses which seem to be liberality, but which, in reality, are most culpably unjust, almost efface the shame of their deeds, in the eyes of the vulgar. Is there anything more detestable than calumny, which ruins, without pity, the reputation of our neighbor? But let it be called frankness of nature, and freedom in giving vent to thought; or, without taking so much trouble, let it be wittily expressed, so that it may amuse, for in the world the art of amusing is regarded as a great virtue, and little is thought of the poison of its arrows, provided they be skilfully thrown; nor of the depth of the wounds, provided they be dexterously made."

Truly, he must have a very mean estimate of Christianity, who could think by such illusions to be able to delude that moral sense, which has always so wonderfully directed it. We might indeed say

that it divines doctrines, and sees all their consequences and developments, before they become manifest in the progress of history. Notwithstanding all the asseverations of the adversaries of Revelation, it will always appear as the calmest and most moderate judge, as soon as any question of the moral sentiments arises. This opinion is expressed by M. Cousin in his last work, where he speaks of the Church as the best judge in this matter. (See Cousin, *Des Pensees de Pascal*, Introduction, towards the end.) Rousseau went further: In a confidential letter to one of his friends, the Church is spoken of as being quite as necessary in correcting the mistakes of reason, as in restraining the extravagances of the heart: "I will say more, and declare that had I been born a Catholic, I would have remained a Catholic, well knowing that your Church puts a most salutary restraint on the wanderings of human reason, which finds neither bottom nor shore, when it strives to measure the depths of things; and I am so convinced of the utility of this restraint, that I have imposed a similar one upon myself by prescribing for the remainder of my life, rules of faith, from which I do not permit myself to deviate."—(See Rousseau, *Correspondence*, dated 1774, Letter to M. Seguier de Saint-Brisson.)

In the midst of the agitations of your philoso-

phers, by turns Atheists, Deists, and Pantheists, of your revolting apologies and of those sentimental idyls, which are mistaken for philosophy, religion alone preserves in its sacred arms, that true and sincere virtue, before which every head should bow.

Napoleon regarded philosophy as powerless in preserving morals and social order, when separated from Revelation. We may judge of this by the report presented by his order to the legislative body, in the session of April 5th, 1802: "Laws only regulate certain actions, said he, religion embraces all; laws only arrest the arm, religion rules the heart; laws have relation to the citizen alone, while religion takes possession of the man. Morality, without religious dogmas, is like justice, without tribunals. The sages and philosophers of all ages, have unceasingly manifested a laudable desire of teaching only what is good and reasonable; but have they been able to agree as to what is reasonable and good? Since the admirable *Offices* of the Roman Consul, have any discoveries been made in morals by the efforts of science alone? Since the dissertations of Plato, have the doubtful points in metaphysics been less numerous? It is then the interest of human governments to protect religious institutions, since it is through their influence that conscience interposes in the affairs of life, and society

finds itself placed under the powerful protection of the Author of nature. Scepticism isolates men as much as reason unites them; it does not render them tolerant, but discontented; it loosens all the bonds which attach them to one another; it fortifies self-love, and makes it degenerate into a sombre egotism; it substitutes doubts for truths; it arms the passions, and is powerless against error; it inspires pretensions without enlightening; it leads through license in opinion, to license in morals; it withers hearts, breaks all ties, and dissolves society." M. Saisset himself, has ventured to speak energetically to M. Michelet, of the radical impotence of Rationalism, when called upon to govern nations, and preserve the morals of a people: "Philosophers," as he remarks with eloquent vivacity, "philosophers make books. What matters it to the people who cannot read them, and who, if they could, would not understand them? Do we ever fancy Kant and Locke as preachers of morals and religion? Besides, every universal want of human nature, requires a regular development. If this want be left to itself, it degenerates, and goes astray. Imagine the most enlightened nation in Europe, deprived of religious institutions, and behold immediately the way opened for every folly.

Sects will arise by thousands, the streets will be filled by prophets and messiahs; each head of a family will be the high priest of a different religion. If then philosophy will exercise the spiritual ministry, she must struggle against this anarchy of individual opinions; let her give men a symbol of faith, a catechism: most probably she will not read to the workmen the *Meditations* of Descartes, or the *Theodicy* of Leibnitz. Who then will compose the necessary catechism? A council of philosophers? Who will delegate their powers to these new doctors? Even suppose it possible to do without a Church and a Pope, we must have a Gospel. What man would dare to say: "Behold the Gospel of Humanity?" and were there one with pride enough to say it, could he find a single other to believe him? If there be any one thing clear, evident to every sensible man, it is, that philosophy is incapable of discharging the spiritual ministry of modern society."—(Emile Saisset, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1844, 403.)

Let us now listen to an old editor in chief of the *Constitutionnel*, and author of *Jerome Paturot*, judging with a just severity, the pretensions of romance writers to become moralists: "Under the influence of literary intoxication," says this rough censor, "romance writers, as well as philosophers, have

dreamed of the palm of the Apostolate. Certainly it is a singular hallucination on the part of those minds who have misused everything, even talent, and who have degraded the profession of letters into the most vulgar trade. The romance writers of this age become moralists, and reformers of society! In truth, the pretension is strange; it is worthy of our times! Before looking without, this literature would have done well to question itself, to search its own reins, to use a Biblical expression. After having been sceptical, mocking, satiated with everything, avaricious, and little scrupulous, all that was wanting was to become hypocritical, to take up morality as a cloak, and social reform as a last expedient for coining money. This is but one more scandal, added to so many previous ones. He a moralist who has borrowed the language of Rabelais to poison the public with indecent tales and cynical recitals! He a moralist who makes a jest of concluding on the success and impunity of crime! A moralist he, who after having made a chaplet of adulterous women, declares that the fall is obligatory for all the daughters of Eve, and that chastity, the rare exception, is a word which may always be translated into want of opportunity! Yes, all are moralists, moralists of the same temper, who will return to virtue, if virtue find a ready sale, and succeed better than

vice."—(Louis Reybaud, *Etudes sur les reformateurs et les socialistes modernes.)* These energetic words have not discouraged M. de Balzac The author of the *Peau de Chagrin*, the *Grandeur et misere des courtisanes*, and of *la Fille aux yeux d'or*, which M. de Milly rightly calls, *infamous*, *both in conception and execution*, has likewise dared to announce himself as a serious moralist, and to declare that he has well merited of his country: "There are doubtless mothers, whom an education free from prejudices, has deprived of no womanly graces, while giving them solid instruction, without the least pedantry. Will they place these lessons before the eyes of their daughters? The author *has ventured to hope it.* He has flattered himself, that *good minds* will not reproach him for having occasionally presented the true picture of morals, that families now-a-days bury in the shade, and that the observer sometimes has difficulty in divining. He has deemed that it is much less dangerous, to mark with a willow branch the perilous passages in life, as the mariners do on the sands of the Loire, than to leave them unknown to the inexperienced." We shall not stop to combat these strange assertions. We should only reproduce the victorious refutation given of them by M. de Milly in his *Revue des romans contemporains*, a conscientious book, which

ought to be in the hands of all priests exercising the holy ministry.

What kind of virtue is that which depends upon the restless agitations of human passion? What can you reply to the miser, when he too will say to you: "It is my heart leads me to the love of gold; I love gold as you love pleasure?" You will reason in vain against him to prove that his passion is vile and degrading, he can always answer you: "I love gold from the bottom of my soul! You think it nothing to ruin the wife of your friend, to deprive his daughter of her honor; you cannot resist the impulses of your heart. Very well; but I prefer to amass gold, which rules the world. You delight in perverting consciences by love and seduction; I prefer to buy them. Seduction is a tedious process, a purchase is sooner accomplished. Gold is my master, pleasure is yours. If you are right, I am not wrong."

But what voices are these I hear resounding in my ears? Those men whom you call vicious, have also their apology. They accuse the severity of the law, which has no compassion on their weakness. All say that their natural inclination is more powerful than their desire for good. In reality, they have all alike sacrificed their lives and virtue to selfishness. Think you, you have done better than they?

Can you, from the height of your wisdom, cast with contempt a stone at them? No, a thousand times, no; you have, like them, sacrificed order and duty to the love of pleasure. For why speak to you here of devotion and virtue? Have you not destroyed the happiness of thousands of lacerated souls? Have you ever respected their repose? What desires have you immolated, and what sacrifices have you made? You have stained and degraded the lives of those whom you pretended to love; you have torn from their brows that crown of purity which is the glory and power of woman. Not thus does virtue and devotion act. You have likewise really violated all the instincts of reason within you, which find their true gratification in pure feelings. You have degraded yourselves by degrading the object of your love. Providence has severely punished you, by depriving you of that sweet repose of the soul, which ever arises from duties fulfilled.

Ah yes! had you felt within your souls the true influence of love, your lives would have been more noble and upright. Love descends from the bosom of God upon all creation. Love is not that transport of the senses which acts in the brute; it is a sentiment, strong and pure as duty; it is love which, speaking in the heart of mothers, teaches them a devotedness even unto death; it is love which, tri-

umphing over man's natural inconstancy, lives in the depths of married hearts, even to the last hour of life; it is love, which leads them to feel as if they were but one soul and one flesh; it is love which inspires Christian hearts with that invincible zeal for humanity entire, which enables them to support the weak, to enlighten the ignorant, to seek out the afflicted, and even to die for them, if necessary. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things: it bears all miseries, it believes all possible for the salvation of its brethren, and hopes all, rather than abandon them to their malice and corruption.

Oh! how melancholy is it to see in the degradation amid which we live, egotistical and sensual passions, audaciously adorning themselves with the most glorious names! It was not enough to have deserted the altars of virtue, but the stones must be torn from her sanctuary, to ornament the impure temple of her enemies. It was not sufficient to have blasphemed virtue, but her very name must be taken from her, in order that, if possible, she might be forgotten among men. When the Heathen overthrew Jerusalem, a man sat down to weep there, over the sad ruins. We too, Christians of these later ages, grief oppresses us and weighs us down. Seated on the fallen stones of the sanctuary, we

gaze towards the East, to discover whether the Sun will again warm the benumbed Earth, and if Jerusalem be again to arise, more brilliant and more beautiful.

CHAPTER V.

SERVITUDE AND LIBERTY.

I SPEAK THEN OF LIBERTY, AND I DENOUNCE ONE OF ITS ENEMIES. I DENOUNCE TO YOU AN ATROCIOUS AND IGNOBLE DESPOTISM, THE DESPOTISM OF THE SENSES.—(*The R. P. Lacordaire.*)

We find in the Gospel this profound observation: "We cannot serve two masters." Man is placed, so to speak, on the borders of two rival empires. In his capacity of spiritual being, he feels himself attracted towards the invisible realm of thought, the end and centre of his intelligence: but sensuous nature, living and vivid within him, endeavors to captivate his soul. She has a thousand modes of speech, and a thousand enchantments to fling round him. She speaks to him through the perfume of flowers, through the warm and balmy breezes of spring, and through all the varied aspects of the earth. Her's is the irresistible charm, which has seduced and perverted half the human race. The history of paganism is nothing but a wild enthusiasm for sensuous nature. What were its hymns, if not love-songs addressed to her?

The aim of Christianity was to recall humanity to the eternal world of thought. It broke the heavy chain which bound man to the creature. But see, how, even under the influence of Revelation, nature oppresses and binds us! How she still speaks to all our senses! How she rules our imaginations! How she misleads and tyrannises over our hearts!

One who had long studied all the mysteries of the soul, said with admirable eloquence:

"Nature is crafty, and draws away many, ensnares them and deceives them, and always intends herself for her end. She labors for her own interest, and considers what gain she may reap from another: she loves idleness and bodily rest; she seeks to have things that are curious and fine, and does not care for things that are cheap and coarse; she has regard to temporal things, rejoices at earthly gain, is troubled at losses, and is provoked at every slight injurious word; she is covetous, and is more willing to take than to give, and loves to have things to herself; she inclines to creatures, to her own flesh, to vanities, and to gadding abroad; she willingly receives exterior comfort, in which she may be sensibly delighted; she doth all for her own lucre and interest; she can do nothing gratis, but hopes to gain something equal, or better, or praise, or favor for her good deeds; and covets to have her actions

and gifts much valued; she rejoices in a multitude of friends and kindred; she glories in the nobility of her stock and descent; she fawns on them that are in power, flatters the rich, and applauds such as are like herself; she easily complains of want and of trouble; she turns all things to herself, and for herself she labors and disputes."

"O Lord my God," adds the eloquent recluse, "who hast created me to thine own image and likeness, grant me this grace, which thou has declared to be so great, and so necessary to salvation, that I may overcome my corrupt nature, which draws me to sin and perdition. For I perceive in my flesh the law of sin contradicting the law of my mind, and leading me captive to obey sensuality in many things; neither can I resist the passions therefore, unless assisted by thy holy grace, infused copiously into my heart. I stand in need of grace, and of a great grace, to overcome nature, which is always prone to evil from its youth. And yet in the flesh I serve the law of sin, whilst I rather obey sensuality than reason. Hence it is, that to will good is present with me, but how to accomplish it I do not find."—(*Imitation of Christ*, book III, chap. LIV, and LV.)

It is above all through pleasure, that the world of sense strives to seize upon us. Surrounded by

Christian ideas, the gross excesses of paganism revolt and disgust us. But observe how subtle and flexible a passion is sensuality; it puts on a thousand seductive forms to mislead and deceive souls. Sometimes it begins in the spirit, to end in the flesh. Then is it nothing but an innocent revery, an effusion of feeling, or an immaterial expression of the desire of loving, always experienced by the heart. Thus does it often commence in souls governed by ideal tendencies, which could never be misled by low or mean passions. It is a kind of sickly poetry, which lulls the imagination; it is a gilded dream caressed by the fancy; it is only a thought, it is not even a desire, and is still far from being a passion. There are souls which, during long years, bear within them this seed of death almost without being aware of it, until the moment comes when the storm bursts, and overwhelms all in its savage fury.

Let us hear the author of the *Poesies de Joseph Delorme:*

"To dream, as you well know, is to will nothing, to pour forth the present sensation at random on surrounding objects, and to swell ourselves into the dimensions of the universe, by mingling our personality with all that we feel; while prayer has a definite aim, is humble, recollected, supplicates with folded hands, and even in its most earnest requests, is crowned with disinterestedness."

M. Sainte-Beuve is not satisfied with proscribing revery, he condemns, without reserve, all those illusions which subtle passion so carefully cherishes, by stating, as we have done, the misery and impotence of human nature.

"Thus," says he, "spoke the pure woman (Madame de Couaen), and I listened mute with delight. The pure woman believes in all these plans for the future; she could abide by them happily to the end, and therein I judge her far superior to man.* But

---

* We very willingly avow the superiority of the nature of woman over that of man. We have no hesitation in confessing that her affections may be much more pure and disinterested. However, let us follow to the end the drama presented by M. Sainte-Beuve in his "Volupte." Lucy de Couaen is certainly the most perfect type imaginable of a truly modest woman: there is nothing egotistical or sensual in her affections. "Lucy will not have a lover," as M. de Milly very well remarks, "Oh! no, never! she will have a friend, she requires a friend; not that the one promised her by marriage, has failed her; but he is too much occupied, he is not on the spot; and to whom can Lucy confide her troubles as a daughter, her torments as a wife and mother? Who will share her anguish, when her husband is in danger? her visits, when he is a prisoner? A lover; Oh! no; still again no, never, but a friend; but this friend will become so dear, so indispensable, that if he leaves her, if he approaches another woman, Lucy will suffer, Lucy will die!"—(De Milly, "Revue des romans contemporains," Sainte-Beuve.)

the man who loves, and who, hearing these blissful projects fall from persuasive lips, believes in them for a moment, and thinks himself capable of conforming to them during his whole life, is deceived, and has not the strength which he imagines he possesses. Man, even were he endowed by Heaven as Abel or John, inevitably suffers in secret from his false and incomplete position; he feels himself wounded in his secondary nature, secretly complaining and warring; moments, apparently the most harmonious, soon become sad, dangerous, and filled with shame; thence angry and cruel recriminations."—(SAINTE-BEUVE, *Volupte.)*

Christian moralists had then a profound insight into the heart of man when they said: "*The greatest disorders have frequently commenced from the sensuousness of a flower.*"* The world of nature is like the Indian fig, which speedily spreads into a forest. The germ hidden within the innermost folds of the heart, takes root and grows; it soon produces both flower and fruit. It stifles in the depths of our being, with its luxuriant vegetation, all the sweet and perfumed plants, which were beginning to germinate beneath the dews of Heaven. Insensibly the reign of nature, that is to say the reign of misery,

* This admirable sentence is from Bousset.

increases without bounds within our souls. When, on the other hand, the spirit strives towards the invisible world for nourishment and strength, it is engaged in a constant struggle for freedom. In this continual communion of the spirit with God, it brings to earth the power of Heaven, Divine liberty. Man is then truly king of the universe, and therein consists his highest glory and greatness. Then shines on his noble brow the glorious privilege of the predestined children of Heaven, a pure and holy liberty. The magnificence of this world, instead of placing his soul in bondage, raises it to the Author of all. The beauty of creatures no longer intoxicates his heart; it but makes him ponder on that infinite and immortal splendor, of which the vain and perishable beauty we see here below, is only a faint reflection.

"Behold then in this land of pilgrimage," said Gerson, "I called my soul to contemplate through the portals of the senses, the heavens, the earth, the sea, and all the marvels of beauty they contain: the beauty of form in bodies, due to their regular proportions and to the charms of color and light; the beauty of tones and song; the beauty of what we touch and taste, of what we feel and breathe; infinite charms, which attract and seduce the heart. And I said: Behold my soul, behold thy loves, the

flowers in thy garland, the fruits in thy crown; complain no longer, and say no more that thou languishest with love. But my soul turned from these delights; she disdained the beauty offered by the senses, she only felt repugnance towards so many lovely objects, she despised all love but that which she felt for Thee, O my God! Proud, as we are when we love, only Thee did she deign to love, O Thou who art the whole of power, wisdom and beauty! What is there, she said to me, O man, what is there for thee and for me in all this beauty of material things? Is it for us to love delights which we share with the brute creation? Creatures may be brilliant and beautiful, I do not deny it; but how much greater is the beauty and the glory of Him who made them all! If an image, a shadow, a form, an odor can thus attract us, how forcibly should we not be drawn towards the Source whence all these things proceed, towards God, the love of whom leaves neither bitterness nor regret! Him do I sing, and on Him do I call. When will He come? I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, that you tell him that I languish with love."

"The beauty of composite things," says a celebrated preacher of the sixteenth century, "results from the proportion of the parts or the harmony of

colors; but in that which is simple, beauty is transfiguration and light; thence must we seek the supreme beauty in its essence, beyond visible objects. The more creatures participate in and approach the beauty of God, the more beautiful they become, in the same manner that the beauty of the body springs from the beauty of the soul."

This sublime philosophy is that of the Sacred Books, reproduced by the celebrated writers we have just quoted.

"With whose beauty (of created things) if they being delighted," says the author of *Wisdom*, "took them to be gods: let them know how much the Lord of them is more beautiful than they: for the first author of beauty made all those things."

A woman well known for the wanderings of her mind and heart, could not refrain from making the following eloquent avowals, thus involuntarily recognising the sublimity of Catholic doctrine on the love of God, and on the love of creatures:

"Love, Stenio, is not what you deem it; it is not this violent aspiration of every faculty towards a created being: it is the holy aspiration of the most ethereal part of our nature towards the unknown. Contracted beings, we seek unceasingly to satisfy the tormenting and insatiable desires which consume us; we seek their gratification in that which sur-

rounds us, and, poor prodigals that we are, we adorn our perishable idols with all the immaterial beauties we have seen in our dreams. The emotions of our senses do not suffice; nature has nothing exquisite enough in the treasure-house of her simple joys to quench the thirst for happiness within us; we would have heaven, and it is not within our grasp. Thence do we see heaven in a creature like to ourselves, and we expend in its service, all the high energies given us for nobler ends. We refuse to God the sentiment of adoration, a sentiment placed within us to be given to God alone; and we pour it out upon a feeble and imperfect being, who becomes the object of our idolatrous worship. Strange error of an exacting and impotent generation! Then, when the veil falls, and we see the creature, miserable and imperfect, behind the clouds of incense and the halo of love, we are dismayed at our delusion, we blush for it, we overturn the idol and trample it under foot. And then we seek another, for we must love, and thus are we again and again deceived until the time when, disabused, purified, and enlightened, we abandon the hope of a lasting affection on earth, and raise towards God that pure and enthusiastic homage, which should never have been offered but to Him alone."*

* See "Wisdom," xiii, 1-3. Gerson, "Œuvres com-

But this admirable doctrine can never be understood by the slave of sense. His horizon narrows daily, and the bright sun shining in his heart insensibly darkens. Alas! he becomes accustomed to live without the thought of God. But without God, where are truth and virtue? What is life without God? How can we forget Him who alone is the Sustainer and Director of creation entire? Can

---

pletes," IV, 742, "Sermon on St. Bernard." Savonarola, "Sermon on the conversation between Christ and the Samaritan woman." The confession we have just quoted is from George Sand, "Lelia." Some writers have advanced that this sublime theology is no other than that of Plato: but this superficial view disappears before a more attentive comparison of the doctrines.

"The Beautiful which Plato teaches us to love," says a celebrated professor of the Sorbonne, "is an idea which is not far from God, for it is the idea of infinite beauty; and all that is infinite comes near to God. However this idea of infinite beauty, compared with that God whom Christianity teaches us to love, is somewhat vague and confused. It is pure; but in proportion as it becomes more refined, it seems to evaporate. It has all that is needful for charming and elevating the imagination, it is the best of literary inspirations; but to attract the soul, to possess it through love, it is wanting in reality. It does not touch the heart as the God, our Father, who is in Heaven, nor can it attach it as the God, made Man, who died for us on the cross. The object offered by Christianity to our love, has then more power over the soul, it is more definite; and let us not forget to remark that in Plato, the object of love

there be any happiness in such a forgetfulness? To forget God! is it not to detach ourselves voluntarily from the living source which vivifies and nourishes our intelligence? See likewise the servitude, the languor, the softness, and the weakness, which rule over that soul! How soon she makes to herself carnal gods that seem to flatter her abasement! She loves to hide from herself the violence of her oppression, but she can scarcely conceal the fact, that her existence has entirely passed into that of another. She knows that her happiness hangs upon a thread,

---

has no reality except in the lower steps of the Beautiful, which is a great difficulty. On the contrary, in Christianity, the reality is at the summit of the ladder, and the soul is naturally drawn upwards. Plato spiritualises love; but he has rendered it somewhat vague and indefinite. Christianity has restored to love the reality which properly belongs to it, by giving it God Himself, as its object and end."—(Saint-Marc Girardin, "Revue des deux Mondes," Oct. 1847, or "Cours de literature dramatique," II.) The theory of Plato in the "Banquet," is very far from being as *pure* as the intellectual author of the "Cours de literature dramatique" thinks it. Does he not himself, when speaking of the ideas of Plato on love, recall this line of Racine:

"What wild disorders caused not love in Greece!"

(See for the proof, Gougenot des Mousseaux, "le Monde avant le Christ." Leland, "Nouvelle demonstration evangelique." Dabas, "de la Decheance de la femme," in "l'Universite Catholique," 3d series, II, III, IV.)

and that thread beyond her power; she feels that her life is bound to another life beyond her control. It is a fearful thing to be no longer master of our own destiny, and to find all our happiness depending on the will of another, who rarely understands all the sacrifices that have been made. Ah! how much then must the pure and peaceable days of Christian liberty be regretted! We were so strong when God was our only master, so raised above this sad world, above the vain opinions of men, and their changing caprices! Alas! how happy would we be to recover our proud independence!

Meanwhile, life vanishes, as the leaves falling one by one from the tree which has nourished them. From day to day we lose our celestial instincts, all thoughts of futurity and immortality; we arrive at the very portals of the tomb without having fulfilled our destiny. Yet we all have a destiny: therein is our greatness and often our misery Each man on coming into this world, brings with him a task to be accomplished. Life is no arena abandoned to man's vain caprice: his mission comes from above, and one day he must render an account of it Life is made for action, not for dreaming; for duty, not for passion. In creating the universe, God certainly did not make it for frivolous ends; He could not give the human race a vocation unworthy of the sub-

limity of His infinite intelligence. The destiny of humanity is to come to God: to live, is to gravitate towards God. Every thought, every affection, which has no relation to this supreme end of our intelligence and of our heart, is lost for immortality. Thus considered, how sublime and beautiful life becomes! It is a continual worship of the Infinite. To live thus, is to think for God, to act for God, and to love for God. The thought of God then constitutes an existence infinitely superior to that of the senses and imagination. I ask you, can you find anything more entirely rational? If God is the cause and end of all creation, should not our life, which springs from Him, wholly return to Him? If He is the uncreated truth, is He not thence the strength of our intelligence? If He is essential order, the very ideal of good, must He not be our permanent rule? If He is the infinite beauty and goodness after which our souls instinctively long, must not love be a happiness as well as a duty?

Such are the serious and truly important ideas which should ever fill our existence. Amid these ideas reigns an atmosphere of calmness and serenity, sought in vain in the bosom of the passions. A certain poet has said, that the temple of the wise is in a region far removed from the agitations of the

vulgar.* This beautiful thought is much more true of the calm of virtue. Indeed, the sentiment of duty can alone deliver from the heavy thraldom of the passions. Worldly and superficial minds imagine virtue to be an insupportable torture;† but they do not know that God has compensations for all sacrifices, and that each trial bears with it its own recompense. Sufferings from duty are not like those from passion. The first leave behind them in the soul, a feeling of peace and happiness; they never occasion that secret bitterness, which is always more or less present, when we have failed to follow the pure instincts of conscience. Suffering is the condition of the human race. Christianity does not conceal from us this serious vocation. But sufferings for sufferings, those which ever follow in the train of the passions are, in my opinion, by far the most to be dreaded. Like ye, I must use my feet on the paths of life; but I do not walk with my brow sadly bent towards the earth, my eyes are raised to Heaven; and it even seems to me as if the

---

* "Edita doctrina sapientum templa serena."—(Lucretius.)

† "Vident cruces," said St. Bernard; "non vident unctiones."

golden stars, the messengers of the Most High, were sympathising in the workings of my destiny.

To all that I have said on the moral consequences of sensuality, I believe I may add a fundamental reflection. Have you not observed, that this passion once rooted in the depths of the soul, old age itself, which destroys so many illusions, does not always weaken its cruel servitude? When this is the case, it gives rise to one of the most degrading positions that can be imagined. In the beginning of life, passion meets with restraints and obstacles, because the soul cannot then systematically break through all the pure traditions derived from our ancestors. Thus youth is often preserved from complete perversion, by the germs of good which it still possesses. Happy inconsequence, which frequently arrests upon the slippery, downward path, many souls which afterwards return to virtue and truth. But when old age comes, it is not thus; sensuality is no longer that heat of the blood, that foolish enthusiasm and mobility of affections and ideas which often constitute the passions of our earlier years. Later, all becomes science and calculation. Maturity of thought, knowledge of men, experience in business, all serve to a frightful diplomacy. They know well they can no longer be loved; but they

can purchase and obtain the semblance through cunning or power.

My soul revolts and grows indignant in thinking of degraded old age, seeking the hut of the poor, to buy for a little bread, the unstained honor of the daughters of the people. These miserable and wicked beings, who can excuse their odious passions neither by the impetuosity of the senses, nor by the weakness of the heart, trade in the happiness and peace of indigent families. It is most deplorable, and, in a liberal age, should revolt all who have preserved a little feeling of honor, and of respect for the imprescriptible rights of the people, to see the family of the workman prematurely corrupted, in her who will one day become a wife and a mother. How edifying is it for the young, who are advanced midway in their career, to have before their eyes these whitened heads, stained with infamy! These shameful fathers will scarcely venture to propose themselves as models to their sons!

See, on the other hand, how the old man, whose life has been just and pure, stands in the midst of his family as a living tradition of the virtues of the past. He can show his little ones with pride, his head bowed by labor and years. When he speaks of chastity, he has no fear of finding the scandals of his life cast into his face; and his life itself is the

most noble instruction he can impart to them. Happy effects of purity of soul, which preserves to all ages and situations their poetry and greatness! There is no mind, let it be ever so corrupted, that does not feel the penetrating charm of virtue. Vice has only a false greatness and a false wisdom. Under its influence the sublimity of human existence disappears, and all becomes narrow and degraded. Those spirits who, notwithstanding some generosity, still bow beneath its heavy yoke, are interiorly humiliated by the debasement of human dignity which is its unfailing consequence. Those, on the contrary, who have devoted their existence to the worship of the ideal, are proud of the elevation of their life and of their destiny. This feeling of interior satisfaction is more precious and more dear than all the sublime gifts of the intellect. And this is not difficult to understand; for if there be anything grand and magnificent in this world of shadows, is it not virtue? Without virtue, what would the world be? A vast arena of combat and misery, wherein we wait for death with veiled heads.

I have said, and I think I have proved, that sensuality saps in individuals the very foundations of moral liberty. But think you that it has any more respect for the venerable and sacred treasure called, the independence of the people?

"Vice," as the R. P. Lacordaire exclaims with admirable energy, "vice does not even spare nations. A time comes, (and for what people has it not sooner or later arrived,) a time comes, when civilised, succeeds to heroic history; personal character dwarfs, the body decreases in size, physical and moral strength vanish together; and from afar we hear the murmur of the approaching barbarian, who watches for the hour when this decrepit people is to be swept from the face of the earth. When the fatal hour strikes, when a country trembles in the presence of its destiny, what has passed over it? What breath has poisoned the source of its life? Ever the same evil, Gentlemen; Death has but one great accomplice. This people has debased itself amid the homicidal joys of sensuality; it has shed its blood drop by drop, and no longer in floods upon the fertile fields of devotion; and for blood shed in this manner, there is an inevitable vengeance, that which all nations whose career is finished, must bear in slavery and ruin.

"Pardon me, Gentlemen, if I do not pursue my idea: why should I? But I see many young people here; let them remember then, every time the tempter attacks them, that he is the enemy of life, of beauty, of goodness, of strength and glory; that he is the universal and national enemy. Ah! Gen-

tlemen, were a Tartar to knock at your door and demand of you some treason against France, how great would be your horror? And yet, sensuality asks from you nothing else; the blood it demands of you, even were it not due to Eternity, would still be the blood of the Fatherland, and of the Future!"

CHAPTER VI.

SENSUALITY IN THE FAMILY.

WOMAN ONLY ESCAPED FROM THE BONDAGE OF THE LAW TO FALL UNDER THE YOKE OF VICE, OR THE EMPIRE OF CORRUPTION.—(*Dabas.*)

The ideas we have previously expressed with regard to the application of the opinions of the *sentimental school* to the requirements of individuals, appear to us invulnerable in every point of view. But it must never be forgotten, that the true value of moral theories, can be most effectually judged in the social order. Has not the Gospel said, with wonderful profundity: "By their fruits shall ye know them?" If Catholic theology, considered in relation to the requirements of individuals, be so easy to defend and justify, it is above all in social questions that we feel its full force and power. The rationalistic systems, which are constantly putting forward the interests of *progress*, hide under this hypocritical pretext the profound egotism which consumes them. In Catholicity, on the contrary, the individual sacrifices himself continually to the family, and the family, to society.

When we consider the doctrine of Christian purity apart from the family and society, it is impossible to understand all its extension and depth. We are fully convinced that the greater part of those who on this point oppose the morality of the Gospel, would tremble were they to know into what abysses they would plunge the modern world. European civilisation rests, in fact, entirely on the constitution of the family; and the family, as now organised, necessarily rests, as on the solid rock, on the Catholic doctrine of chastity.

We will not conceal the importance and the difficulties of the question we here propose to consider; but we will approach it with that frankness, sincerity and good faith, which our adversaries themselves, have ever acknowledged in all our discussions.

"Of all the associations of which man is a member," as M. l'abbé Gaume very truly observes, "the family is the first. In its bosom, he receives the double life of body and soul; under its wing he grows up, and, prepared by its care, he passes into civil society. Thus we see it established by the Creator Himself at the beginning of the world, and receiving on its brow, with the first benediction given on earth, the glorious seal of immortality: '*Increase and multiply, and fill the earth.*' Immutable as the God from whom it emanated, this sentence will never

pass away. In vain did the first rebellion destroy the religious association of man with God; in vain did the Deluge engulf the political association in its avenging waves: the family will survive as an ever fertile source whence the stream of generations will flow down through ages, until the human race shall be complete.

"The family is not only the most ancient of associations, it is also, at least in one sense, the most important. And first, it is the basis of all the others,* the basis of the State and of the Church. In fact, what is the State, if not the union of a certain number of families, under the authority of a common head, for the preservation and development of their existence and well being? The Church herself, what is she but the union of all Christian families under the authority of a common father, for the preservation and development of their spiritual life? So that what the root is to the tree, the spring to the river, the base to the edifice, the family is to the State and Church; from the hands of the family the first receives its citizens, the second, her children.

"In a still deeper sense and for reasons yet more profound, the family should be called the most im-

* This sentence and the succeeding ones of this paragraph are only true in a modified, and not in the simple sense of the terms used.—Ed.

portant of associations. Is not the power of making man what he is, and what he is to be, an infallible preparation of the glory or the shame, the happiness or misery of the world? Such is the formidable mission of the family. Does it not exercise a daily and exclusive influence on the first years of infancy? And is not infancy as soft wax on which any form may be impressed? And these forms, whether good or evil, received so readily in infancy, are they not with some rare exceptions, the only impressions which are never effaced? Man finds himself with astonishment in the decline of his age, on the very brink of the tomb, even such as he knew himself in the spring of his years. More than three thousand years ago, this fact had already become proverbial." —(GAUME, *Histoire de la societe domestique*, I, Chapter 1.)

If such be the importance of the family, I am not surprised that the sovereign Creator of all things, blessed with His own divine hands the union of the ancestors of the human race, and established it on the triple basis of *unity*, *indissolubility*, and *purity*. "In fact," says a learned commentator on the Scriptures, "marriage is the most intimate and inviolable of all human ties. Therefore was it that God took Eve from the side of Adam, thus signifying, that the man and woman are less two than one;

that they are indivisible and inseparable. As one flesh cannot be divided and still remain one, so the husband cannot be separated from the wife, since he is of one flesh with her; and this unity of flesh, is only a figure of the unity of love and of will which should reign between them."—(CORNELIUS A LAPIDE, *In Genesim comment*, p. 81.)

Such was the original plan of the Creator. And to comprehend to what a degree human passion had perverted it, it is only necessary to cast a rapid glance over ancient society. Among all pagan nations, woman became an instrument of pleasure, debased by despotism; or perhaps, through some rare combination of circumstances, turning against the family and society the very sword with which she had been stricken, she amazed the world by the monstrous boldness of her immodesty: she was by turns a slave, bowed beneath the rod, or a Messalina, astounding the universe from the throne of the Cæsars.

In the East, the head of the family, constantly ruled by egotism and sensuality, claimed the power of life and death over his children, and subjected woman, with boundless audacity, to all the caprices of a brutal and corrupting despotism. Unity, indissolubility, and purity, these sacred principles of primitive marriage, were contemptuously trodden

under foot by nearly the whole of Asiatic civilisation; and these people, whom the pure light of the Gospel has not as yet enlightened, dare to preserve under the very eyes of Christian liberty, as the most precious tradition of the old pagan world, the degradation of the mother, and the enslavement of the child *

---

* In Egypt, according to Diodorus Siculus, private individuals married as many wives as they pleased.—See Diodorus Siculus, book I, § 80. The Egyptians likewise married their sisters, and justified this incest by the example of Osiris.—See Montesquieu, "Esprit des lois." With much a moral, we must not be astonished at the profound corruption of the women. Herodotus and Strabo relate the abominable customs of the temple of Thebes.—See Herodotus, book 1st, Chapter 182; Strabo, book XVII. Herodotus likewise gives an account of the infamies of the Mendesian nome, the abominations of the feasts of Adonis and Isis, as well as the odious processions, known under the name of Phallophori.—See Herodotus, book II, Chapter XXV. and III. The exceeding corruption of the Egyptian women, sanctioned by their religion, is universally admitted. In Babylonia, Phœnicia, and Syria, the degradation of morals surpassed all we can imagine. MM. Michelet and Quinet (who are no Jesuits) are entirely revolted by the corruption of these nations.—See Michelet, "History of Rome;" Quinet, "Genius of Religions," Religions of Western Asia. Details may be found in the "Pentateuch," and in Hengstenberg, "Authenticity of the Pentateuch," theology of the Pentateuch. Among the Persians, corruption was not so great, but the women were not less subjected to a

But why should we stop to trace the frightful picture of the profound corruption of oriental antiquity? Is not Asia before us, with all its slavery and degra-

---

degrading despotism. Polygamy and the seraglio were the bases of the family.—See Montesquieu, "Esprit des lois," liv. VII, chap. IX. Incest between mother and son was approved by their religion. As to the situation of women among barbarous nations, Gaume, "Histoire de la societe domestique," chap. IV, VI and VII, may be consulted; and above all Gougenot des Mousseaux, "le Monde avant le Christ." In all that we have said of the East, we have not yet spoken of the condition of women and children among the Jews; it was certainly better than among the other Asiatic nations.—See Cellerier, "Esprit de la legislation mosaique;" Michælis, "Droit mosaique;" Guenee, "Lettres de quelques guifs." M. Dabas has, in our opinion, summed up with justice and precision, the opinions of these learned men. "The East, says he, presents one striking exception; but this very exception confirms the rule, for it is offered by the people of God. If respect for woman was anywhere to be found in antiquity, must it not have been among the people who, with the laws of God, preserved a correct remembrance of the origin of the first human couple, and the promise of the redemption through the Son of Mary? In fact, it is found, and to a surprising degree, in the history and legislation of the Hebrews. There is no legitimating violence and tyranny towards women, no arbitrary sequestration, no deliberate degradation, nor shameful traffic among them. Woman does not appear in their midst as enslaved by nature; and even when circumstances have reduced her to a servile condition, her person is still fully protected by the law."—(Dabas, "De la decheance de la Femme," in the "Universite Catholique," 2d series, I.)

dation, as a perpetual and striking example of a society debased by the love of pleasure? Is it not there, as a convincing proof of the wonderful progress effectuated in the world through Christian chastity? Those who so shamelessly deny the astonishing services rendered to humanity by the Church, may cast a glance upon that society of slavery, corruption, and misery. No spectacle ever made a deeper impression on us; it seems as if Providence, in order to confound the ingratitude of modern nations, and to show the whole power of Christian purity, had desired to preserve under our eyes that old pagan world, bound in its eternal chains, whose heavy links Catholic civilisation is beginning to rend.

The East, considered in a moral point of view, may be divided into four great zones: Barbarian and Mohammedan, Chinese and Brahminical society; these divisions comprise the whole of Asia.

Among the barbarians of the East, as among the savages of Africa and Oceanica, woman is a stupid instrument of pleasure, or rather a beast of burden.

But how can I pity the condition of these miserable and degraded beings, when I turn my eyes towards the cities governed by the sabre and the Koran? The wife of the Tartar, unceasingly wandering through the steppes of Asia, can at least con-

template the soft blue of the heavens; she breathes the air of freedom; sometimes, when the chase or the battle call her masters from the tent wherein passes her whole life, she can dream and weep according to the fancy of the hour. But why these prisons, why these hideous jailors? Wherefore are these women sold in the markets, and driven into the midst of the bazaars as a herd of ordinary cattle? To see a rampart of iron rise eternally before her eyes, to serve till death an abhorred despot, and to drag out a languid life amid the tedious idleness of a harem, is the fate of the Mohammedan woman, the unfortunate victim of despotism and sensuality. M. Victor Hugo has very happily described this situation in the following lines from his *Orientales:*

"Ah! were I but free,
This land would I love,
This fair, plaintive sea,
These bright stars above,
These broad fields of maize,
If through the wall's shade,
Gleamed not on my gaze,
The Spahi's keen blade."

Ah! when will the word of Christian apostles be able to break those chains, and to restore light and liberty to those degraded souls? O holy Christian liberty, mayest thou be more swift than the winds,

more rapid than the lightning, and more powerful than the thunderbolt! Mayest thou, when the day of the Lord shall have arrived, break this cruelest link of slavery, and raise to Heaven the brow of the lowest of slaves! O my God! when will the happy moment come when the cross, that glorious standard of the enfranchisement of the nations, shall shine from the points of the minarets, and from the summits of the pagodas? When will humanity, rising from its degradation, be able to repeat in one immense chorus from the banks of the Ganges to the shores of the Seine:

"Christ triumphs, He reigns and is the Victor."

We have found slavery among the Mussulmans, in its most undisguised and brutal form; we shall find it again in the bosom of Brahminical civilisation, under the appearance of a hypocritical domesticity, and added to it, the domination of the rod.

We must first remark that religion, far from being, as in Christian countries, the tutelary guardian of woman, begins by consecrating her degradation as a right, before it is basely tolerated in the ordinary practice of life.

"The woman," says the law of Menu, "is *protected* in her infancy by her father, in her youth by her husband, and in her old age by her son. The ungovernable impetuosity of temperament, the in-

constancy of character, the want of any permanent affection, and the natural perversity which characterise women, will never fail, in despite of all imaginable precautions, to detach them in a short time from their husbands."—(See Manava-Dharma-Sastra, quoted in J. de Maistre's *Eclaircissement sur les sacrifices.)*

The Hindoos have taken literally the odious regulations of their sacred code. Destined from her infancy to a servile life, the young girl never receives, in her paternal home, any kind of moral education. It is the same with intellectual instruction: "It is an unheard-of thing that a girl should know how to read," says the Rev. Father Tassis. "They never attend school. A girls' school in this country would be an anomaly. If instruction is so little regarded, we may guess what the state of education must be. It is among the many other things of which the Indians have no idea. I do not think it has ever entered into the head of an Indian father to form the heart and feelings of his children. Thus, the virtues which are the fruit of a good education, as generosity of mind, discretion, affection, fidelity, and many others, are here very rare, *if indeed they are not despised.*"—*(Annals of the Propagation of the Faith*, Sept. 1847.)

Among Catholics, the lowest child of the people

learns in the village catechetical instructions to respect herself, and to make others respect her high dignity as a woman and as a Christian.

M. de Cormenin fully understood the power of that popular teaching which has contributed so much to the progress of liberty and civilisation. "Where the Church is, there is the village; one would say that like a mother, she gathers all her children around her; she is the central point whereto all their life tends; she is the bond of the community. The institution of churches has done more to advance civilisation than anything else. There alone do all the members of the parochial corporation, divided, isolated and dispersed among the cottages, assemble and meet together. There are all sexes and ages, old men and children, the men on one side, and the women on the other. There kneel together before the awful majesty of God strong and weak, rich and poor, all united by the same humility, and blended in the same equality. There, from the height of his pulpit, the preacher reminds the greatest of the meanness of their origin, and the lowest of the grandeur of their destiny. There, he gives all men, while reading the Gospel, the most glorious examples, as well as the most beautiful precepts of fraternity: the proud leave the church more modest, the guilty, more repentant, the power of malice

is softened, and the miserable learn resignation."*

But in pagan countries, the priesthood is silent; or if it teach anything, it is always respect for despotism. Modern liberty, which has gone forth from the catechetical instructions of the country ecclesiastics, will never emanate from the Brahminical sanctuaries; so that, when the Hindoo girl attains the fairest years of her life, she can have no idea of the duties of a wife, nor of the glorious vocation of a mother.

"What, above all, is here wanting to the woman," says a pious missionary, "is education. As it is she who first directs the heart of the child, as it is upon her knees that she must imbibe the first principles of religion and morals, the girl who has received nothing from her mother on all these points, can give nothing to her children; the only inheritance she can leave them is ignorance, a deprivation of every noble and elevated sentiment, and an absence of all ideas of order, probity and uprightness, which faults are propagated from one generation to another."—(The Rev. Father Tassio, *Annals of the Propagation of the Faith*, Sept. 1847.)

---

* We cannot quote all, for it would be necessary to introduce the whole of this admirable chapter.—(See Timon, "Entretiens de village," l'Eglise.)

Finally, the marriage day arrives, the woman is *bought* by her husband: she of course is never consulted as to her tastes and inclinations The betrothed see each other for the first time on their wedding day: as a young man only requires a servant and not a true wife, there is no need of much deliberation and choice. Besides, in order to establish peace and maintain harmony of disposition, the Hindoo holds always in abeyance, the resource of force. In this classic land of despotism, conviction is nothing, and the rod is all; so that there is no inhabitant of the peninsula who does not govern his family by means of brutality to which the meanest of servants among us would not submit.* In Catholic countries, thanks to Christian liberty, the poorest woman attached to the soil; the most miserable beggar, whose only support is a few pennies won by the sweat of her brow, is more respected than a Hindoo wife, under the laws of the wise and ancient Brahminical civilisation!

But despotism invariably causes hypocrisy: the

---

* The Indian women never eat with their husbands and sons. "If they commit the least fault," says Father Tassis, "they must expect to expiate it by blows; it is a husband's duty to beat his wife when she does not serve him according to his requisitions. *There is no Indian who does not use the rod.*"

women, as might be foreseen, never love their husbands. They dry their eyes as soon as the corpse is removed from their sight. Formerly, the widow was obliged to burn herself on the funeral pile of her husband.* As European laws no longer permit these abominable sacrifices, the pagan priests revenge themselves by crushing the widow under all kinds of vexations. After having deprived her of the power of inheriting from her husband, they forbid her to marry again, and leave her to drag out the remainder of her melancholy life, without protection, and without friends.

"This is the sum of my observations on the condition of women in India," says the good missionary who has furnished us with these curious details. "Let those of the same sex to whom you will have the opportunity of communicating them, understand from this sketch what they owe to Christianity, and

* It was not until after the 4th of December, 1829, that an ordinance was promulgated by the general government of English India for the abolition of sacrifices. The same measures had been taken in French India some years previously. But, in 1803, the government of Bengal, wishing to know the number of women led by a barbarous prejudice to the funeral pyres of their husbands, found it was not less than 30,000 every year.—(See de Maistre, "Eclaircissement sur les sacrifices.)

what reason they have to love our holy religion, to attach themselves to it more and more, to seek all their happiness in its maxims, and to impart to their children the treasure of its institutions, and of its divine hopes."

In Chinese civilisation, women are no happier. What justice can they expect from a degraded people, of whom a cotemporary missionary says: "China is a den of robbers, a vast receptacle of infamy, a forest of reeds filled with wind." An officer of the Navy, just returned from the Celestial Empire, related still more odious details to one of our most intimate friends. The victim of the general corruption, woman has become one of its most active instruments. And, a thing before unheard of, she has even forgotten that feeling which is the last to die in the female breast, the feeling of maternity. It is now the Christian virgin who seeks in the crossways, and rescues from the ditches, those poor children, to whom the iron law of paganism refuses even the tears of a mother!

If we may believe Malte-Brun, the Chinese peasant harnesses his ass and his wife to the same plough. As for the abuses of polygamy, they have been so great that, according to De Guignes, some of the Chinese Emperors had as many as ten thousand wives. "There are no castes in China," says

M. Eduard Biot, "but we find, as in all Asiatic countries, a wide division between the two sexes. Persons straitened for means, often sell their daughters; whence the custom of polygamy, tolerated in China since a very high antiquity. Every Chinese may have, besides his wife, several wives of the second rank or concubines, whom he buys, and who occupy the place of servants in his house. In cities where the population is crowded, as in Canton, the poor frequently have not the means of supporting their children until the age when they may be sold. Thus many children are exposed, and even destroyed at the moment of their birth, *especially girls, of whom they seek every means of ridding themselves.*"—(Biot, article *China* in the *Encyclopedia* of the nineteenth century.) But let us see what these Chinese women, deemed unworthy even of life, become under the influence of Christianity. "You have already, my Rev. Father, heard of the Chinese virgins; I too wish to say a few words concerning them. They may truly be called *the flower of Christianity*, and this species of flower does great honor to the garden of the Church. How beautiful is it to see the lily of virginity blooming here amid the corruption of idolatry! No idea can be conveyed of the license of manners in pagan lands; but the excess of vice serves in the designs of God, to

heighten the glory of the purest of virtues, and to a clear sighted vision, nothing more could be needed for the recognition of its celestial origin. The attraction towards this angelic state nowhere appears more powerful than there, where, according to nature, its very name should be unknown. In my district, which contains about nine thousand Christians, there are more than three hundred virgins. Quite a number of chapels owe their existence to the liberality of these pious women, and almost all the alms I have received for the mission, have reached me through their hands. Those who have no means of support but their own labor, desire likewise to exercise their charity, and find means of making their offerings, but so humbly that they avoid being known as carefully as a robber when he is engaged upon some wicked enterprise. These virgins are most useful in instructing the ignorant, in baptising and rearing abandoned children, and in exhorting the pagans in danger of death. If they are deaf to their exhortations, they must at least praise their zeal, and respect their virtue. The Chinese virgins are capable of all that is effected in Europe by the Sisters of St. Vincent of Paul. Thus is God pleased to extend His blessing over all the labors undertaken for love of Him and for His glory."—(The Rev. Father Estéve, *Annals of the*

Propagation of the Faith, Jan. 1848.) (See also some admirable details in a letter from the Rev. Father Werner, *ibidem*, Sept. 1849.)

It is true that in the West, woman was less degraded, I should have said, less of a slave, for the theory of pleasure, which constituted the very basis of paganism, had no respect for the glorious crown that the Creator placed on the brow of the first woman, the mother of the living. If there was any country of the ancient world where woman should have been honored, free from servitude, and independent of all prejudices, it was Greece. Greece was, in fact, before Jesus Christ, pre-eminently the land of liberty. Hellas certainly was not, as Asia, the classic ground of slavery; Greece was governed by sages and philosophers. Socrates spoke in the public squares of Athens, Zeno assembled his disciples under its porticos, Aristotle taught in the Lyceum, and Plato, in the gardens of Academus. And in Greece too, there were liberty and honors for women; occasionally a great influence was accorded them on the destinies of the Athenian democracy. But was it to the young girl with chaste and modest brow, was it to the wife crowned with the glory of maternity, that the city of Minerva raised her altars? We find in Greece, women surrounded by young and old, by sages and poets; but these women are *not*

*pure;** and it is to the house of the courtesan Theodota, that Socrates goes, surrounded by the youth of Athens, to discuss love philosophically! †

Love! Could a single woman in all Greece boast of having inspired it? "The courtesans themselves," says M. Dabas, "have only the surface of the heart; the depths remain attached to more shameful affections; for we will barely allude to those scandalous liasons, of which the great men of Greece have given the example, which poetry has taken pleasure in celebrating, and for which philosophy herself, has not sufficiently blushed. Thus, the beauty of woman, her last fascination, is powerless in restoring to her even a part of her lost empire. Love exists, but not for her; she has only the dross and the refuse." ‡

---

* See Barthelemy, "Voyage of Anacharsis," II, chap. 20. In Greece prostitution was consecrated by religion. The Temple of Venus alone, at Corinth. had as many as two thousand courtesans consecrated to the goddess. See Guenee, "Lett. de quelques Juifs," III, lett. IX.

† See Stapfer, "Biographie de Michand," art. "Socrate." The philosopher willingly permitted his disciples to retain their relation with prostitutes, provided they did not become attached to it.

‡ Dabas, "De la decheance de la femme et de sa rehabilitation." Universite Catholique, 2d series, III. If the truth of these assertions be doubted, Strabo, book X, may be consulted; Plato, "Dialogues," especially "The Banquet;" Plutarch, "Moralia," treatise on "Love;"—he there develops at length this sad subject.

With such manners and ideas, it was impossible that woman should not soon be overwhelmed by degradation and despair. The women of Athens, of that little world ruled by philosophy, were thievish, sensual, and dissolute. If you have any doubts, read Aristophanes, who has preserved for us in his living pictures, the whole history of the epoch.

But woman could not reach liberty through vice; she must reascend her throne of wife and mother, crowned with the lilies of modesty, and adorned with the purple of martyrdom; and in Athenian society, license in morals never preserved her from the endless suffering and incurable despair of slavery.

"Of all creatures living and endowed with reason, cries the Medea of Euripides, we women are the most miserable; we must first, at an enormous price, buy a husband, the absolute master of our persons: and in this is the greatest risk, whether we receive a bad or a good one; for divorces bring not good fame to women, nor is it possible to repudiate one's husband. What is then left us but to die?"

We have seen the women of paganism under the government of philosophers; let us now consider them under the power of statesmen. In fact, as Athens was ruled by Wise Men, so was Rome by Politicians; now this justice must be rendered to statesmen, that they are generally more enlightened

as to the interests of the family and society than philosophers, who dwell far removed from the actual business of life, and who but imperfectly comprehend great social necessities.

Thus at Rome, the condition of woman was generally better than at Athens: the matron had her honors and privileges, the family was seriously considered: and while the austerity of republican manners was preserved, we might almost believe that the Roman city would escape the contagion which at its leisure devoured pagan society.

But if statesmen were more just towards woman than philosophers; if, notwithstanding the enormous abuses of guardianship and divorce; if, notwithstanding the rights of life and death accorded to fathers of families, her condition was generally better in Roman, than in Grecian society, she was very far from receiving from the politicians of Rome, that profound and serious consideration she has acquired in the bosom of Christian civilisation, through the influence of the Gospel. The majesty of Senators and Consuls was constantly reproaching her with corruption, or at least with fickleness, weakness, and imbecility. Did not Cato, in the midst of the Conscript Fathers, while addressing the most solemn assembly in the world, go so far as to say in his severe language when speaking of some claims of the

women: "If you give the rein to the caprices of these *ungovernable* animals, do you flatter yourselves that they will voluntarily place any limits to their license!" Alas! it would seem as if the Roman matrons had labored with all their strength to verify by their disorders, this bitter prophecy of the inflexible Censor!

A fearful history might be written by any one who would patiently collect all that Latin authors have related of the morals of the Roman women, towards the last days of the Republic, and at the beginning of the Empire. But why speak of the numberless adulteries, and the frequent use of poison, which so often disturbed the peace, and annihilated the order of families? All these crimes sink into insignificance before the excesses which characterised the decline of the Empire. I should never venture to recount the infamies of the festivals of Flora and Cybele, or the mysteries of the Bona Dea, the odious privilege of the knowledge of which the noble matrons had reserved to themselves, and which made the Roman soldier who has left us the frightful picture of them in his cutting satires,

blush for shame.* I will be silent upon the details of this strange history.

The time had come; the blood of Christ had flowed on Calvary, Christianity had arisen, and was already increasing in the bosom of the world it was to purify and save.

---

* "Nota bonæ secreta deæ."—(Juvenal, Satire VI, 314.)

CHAPTER VII.

THE FAMILY REGENERATED.

MODESTY CAUSES PEACE IN A FAMILY; IT IS THE FOUNDATION OF THE UNION AND HARMONY THEREIN REIGNING.—(*St. Cyprian.*)

Christian women have been reproached with their invincible attachment to the religion of their fathers. A certain professor, celebrated for his eccentricities, has even ventured to write an odious libel on this subject, which the indignation of honest men of all parties has justly condemned. We mean M. Michelet's book, entitled: *Du Pretre, de la Femme, et de la Famile.* A rationalistic writer has animadverted upon some of the falsifications contained in this odious pamphlet. "This book," says M. Saisset, "considered with regard to its first principles, and with a philosophical eye, contains *numerous and capital errors.* Nay more, it is calculated to impress a new and dangerous direction on minds, to substitute for legitimate defence, violent attack, at once passionate and weak; and for expanded, just and solid criticism of religious institutions, a blind hatred of these very institutions, while waiting for

their overthrow; in short, to substitute for the spirit of the nineteenth century, such as forty years of labor and progress have made it, that of a past age,—a spirit *once productive*, but now sterile and deplorable." Then, characterising the aim and spirit of M. Michelet, he adds: "M. Michelet's book is a violent manifesto against the Catholic priesthood and religion, indeed, against every existing priesthood and religion. Its avowed aim is to represent all priests and all religion as most deplorable evils, of which the overthrow cannot be too much desired or labored for. The tendency of the book, the effect produced, and intended to be produced by it, is, to direct the whole intellectual activity, and philosophical strength of our age, towards the ruin of religious institutions. If such be M. Michelet's design, why should we conceal it? Let us then venture to tell M. Michelet, . . . the sympathising historian of the middle ages, who has concurred with M. Guizot in withdrawing history from the track of the Dupuis and Raynals, in order to lead it into the broad paths of an extended and impartial criticism, . . . that he is destroying his own work, breaking with his past, retrograding, and borrowing the passions, hatreds, narrow views, and blind prejudices of the eighteenth century. How is it that this enlightened mind fails to perceive that, far from advancing

and preparing the way for philosophy, he retards its progress ?"*

As for ourselves, we will be content with recalling to a man who prophesies the downfall of Christianity, the following words, which close one of the volumes of his *History of France:* "Ah! I confide, for Christianity in the very words addressed by the Church to her dead: *He who believes in me cannot die*, Christianity has believed, loved and understood; God and man have met within her sacred precincts. She may change in outward appearance; but perish, never . . . She will one morning appear to the eyes of those who think they are guarding her tomb, and will arise on the third day."

But to return to our subject.—What is there so extraordinary in the unconquerable fidelity which seems to connect woman eternally with the destinies of the Holy Church of God? "Woman protected by Christianity, in turn protects it," says one of the most profound thinkers of modern days. There,

---

* Saisset, "Revue des Deux Mondes," 1844, Renaissance du Voltairianisme. To appreciate all the tendencies of M. Michelet's book, Nettement's "Etudes sur le feuilleton-roman," II, should be consulted. For a review of the details and the false statements, see "Du Pretre de M. Michelet, et du simple bon sens, par un solitaire."

where you can see only an iniquitous mystery, or an effect of weakness and custom, impartial history will find the prodigy of an immortal gratitude, which no violence, persecution or calumny, has ever succeeded in wearying!

If woman now plays so important a part in the history of modern society; if she has become the centre of the family, the guardian of morals, the tutelary angel of the young generations, to what does she owe these magnificent prerogatives? Were the legislators of the ancient world able to preserve her from slavery and licentiousness? Did philosophy emancipate her? Had the progress of the human mind given her her true place by the domestic hearth?* One day a sinful woman knelt

---

* We have spoken of the condition of woman throughout Asia. But what must we say if we give any account of her deplorable situation in the numerous islands of Oceanica? We cannot, however, pass over in silence some important and significant facts. In New Zealand, husbands break up their households at the prompting of the first caprice.—See Gaume, "Histoire de la societe domestique," II, 232. In the same country, when the pagans wish to marry, they forcibly seize upon a young girl, and carry her off.—See "Annales de la Propagation de la Foi," No. 86, page 24. In Australia, the rape is accompanied by the most brutal circumstances. In the same country, women are often sold to strangers for a piece of bread.—See Gaume, "Histoire de la societe domestique," II,

at the foot of the Gibbet of slaves: a few drops of blood fell upon that unknown penitent. That day, eternally memorable in history, pagan woman, represented at the foot of the Cross by the repentant Magdalen, arose, freed from the stains of sin, and released from her chains. Her flesh, which she had defiled by shameful crimes, was purified beneath the scourges of the executioner, upon burning piles, and amid the tortures of the thumb-screw and the rack.* "God be praised," exclaims St. John Chrysostom, at the sight of the courage of women; "God be praised! Woman is steadfast against death. Woman, who brought death into the

234. In the Marquesas Islands, they are entirely separated from the society of men.—See "Annales," No. 73, page 574. In the Vitian Archipelago, they are sometimes eaten, and frequently immolated on the tombs of their husbands.—See "Annales," No. 82, page 192. But if an idea be desired of the power of Catholicity in rescuing from corruption the nations most degraded by a brutal sensuality, the reader may consult the admirable picture of the conversion of several of these islands. There, as everywhere, Christianity has raised woman through purity, and re-established the family on its true basis —See "Annales," No. 56, page 192 and 168; No. 60, page 510; No. 66, page 193; No. 68, page 59; No. 74, page 37; No. 82, page 216; No. 84, page 349.

* See Ruinart, "Acta sincera martyrum." Universite Catholique, XVII, 385. Les femmes martyres.

world, now breaks that old weapon of the devil. A being, feeble, and exposed by nature to every outrage, she has herself become an invincible weapon in the hand of God. Woman is steadfast against death. Who is not overpowered with astonishment! Woman is steadfast against death, against that death which the saints themselves formerly found so formidable and so terrible!"—(St. John Chrysostom, *De SS. Bernice et Prodosce, virg.)* She, who until then had bowed her head to every tyranny, resisted without a tremor the majesty of Rome, braved the proconsuls on their bloody tribunals, and wearied the lictors with her miraculous patience. The great men of paganism had declared her unworthy of the truth, and incapable of virtue: the Church gave her so large a share in the apostolate, that with the most glorious conquests of Christianity a woman is always found associated.

This wonderful moral revolution is the work of purity. In fact, the Gospel restored to woman her whole nobility and dignity through the doctrine of virginity.

She had reached in Greece, a kind of independence, through the license of prostitution; but was this sad liberty capable of elevating either her or the family? Was it through dishonor, and through the contempt which naturally follows immorality

that she could regain her position, and reconquer her rights?* Liberty can never spring from shame. Virtue alone produces and confirms it. To raise the dignity of woman, Christianity created for her a new condition, wherein she might find independence without license, and merit respect through the greatness of her heroism. In a word, a miracle must be created, and that miracle was the Christian virgin.

Pagan society restrained and enslaved woman in all the developments of her existence; but after a time, there appeared before the eyes of the astonished world, a young girl whose only title came from God, and who, in her station as Spouse of Jesus Christ, saw every head bend respectfully before her. The glory of the Redeemer triumphing in Heaven, seemed to shine around her whom the Christian people surrounded with perpetual homage. Man, while contemplating this transfigured being, recognised a sister whom, until then, he had misunderstood and trampled under foot. He comprehended that she, whom the Church judged worthy of becoming the Spouse of the Saviour, could no longer remain in

* M. Saint-Marc Girardin develops this thought admirably, in the beginning of his analysis of the Treatise of St. Methodius on Virginity, "Essais" II

the condition of a slave. Thus, the doctrine of virginity, which appeared indirectly to attack the institution of marriage, was, on the contrary, the very means which Christianity made use of, to purify and regenerate it, without violence or agitation.

How indeed, could a Christian people possibly avoid learning to respect woman deeply, when they heard their most illustrious doctors speak as follows: "All the gold in the world cannot outweigh a chaste soul, exclaims Tertullian. Beautiful and ever young in the eyes of the Lord, the virgins live for Him, and converse familiarly with him; they possess Him night and day, and bring Him a portion in their prayers. They receive, in exchange, from the divine Spouse, His grace as a dowry, together with the accomplishment of all their desires. They are on earth as the angels in Heaven, and seem already to belong to the family of gloried spirits."—(*Ad Uxorem*, Lib. 2.)

St. Cyprian, the glorious martyr of Carthage, is no less eloquent when the admirable privileges of the Christian virgins are to be celebrated: "Ye perfumed flowers of the Church, master-pieces of grace, ornaments of nature, image of God wherein the sanctity of the Word is reflected, and most illustrious portion of the flock of Jesus Christ, ye have commenced to be on earth what we shall one day be in Heaven."—*(De Discip. Virg.)*

St. Ambrose, as well as ourselves, considered virginity as the starting point of the restoration of woman's dignity:

"Every virgin is a *queen*," said he, "either because a virgin consecrated to God is the *Spouse of the greatest of Monarchs*, or because having conquered the passions which occasion the most degrading thraldom, she acquires a new empire over herself. . . . A virgin is a gift from Heaven; she is the joy and glory of her parents, she exercises in her home the ministry of chastity. A virgin is a victim self-immolated each day, in order to appease the anger of God by her sacrifice."—*(De Virginitate.)* St. Chrysostom, St. Jerome, St. Augustin, and St. Bernard make use of no other language.

The Church then, by re-establishing everywhere the true dignity of woman, and her true liberty, remodelled the family on the original plan of the Creator, and it is well known that modern civilisation is the result of the truly social institution of Catholic marriage.

But it seems now, that in consequence of the prevalence of the new ideas we have been discussing, a strong reaction is preparing and has already appeared.

Marriage is falling into discredit and contempt. "Formerly," says M. Saint-Marc Girardin, "there

was one marriage in every one hundred and twenty inhabitants; now, there is only one marriage in every one hundred and fifty inhabitants. The increase in the number of natural children corresponds with the diminution in the number of marriages: in most of the large cities there is one natural child out of every three children." This is not only true for Paris, the fact is as remarkable at Vienna, as M. Ozanam has shown, in an eloquent article in his *Dangers de Rome*, in the *Correspondant*, of February, 1848.

"Within our memory," adds M. Saint-Marc Girardin, a new word has been invented to designate illicit connections, *free marriage;* and as there are persons who think that every word necessarily conveys an idea, they imagine that the above expression signifies some new doctrine on marriage. But it is not so. What new doctrine can there be on marriage? One is either married or not married; one is bound by the civil and religious law to one woman during life; and all this without equivocation or evasion. Marriage is so clear and so determinate an action, that there is no means of explaining it away. In the Church it is a sacrament; and at the Mayor's office, an institution; in either case, its whole strength consists in its inviolable perpetuity; for, take from marriage its perpetuity, and it be-

comes an illicit union, for a longer or a shorter period, and more or less unlawful; it is a lease for a longer or shorter term."—*Essais*, II, *Du mariage.*

Modern literature echoes these new ideas, and under the pretext of delineating the passions and excitements of the world, tends to give an opinion of woman, which will scarcely encourage a man to devote to her his future, and to unite his destiny with hers by eternal bonds. Women such as we find them in cotemporary romances, would, for the most part, make the very prostitutes blush. I am, however, very far from believing that all those of the nineteenth century resemble the daughters of the *Pere Goriot*, of Balzac; the heroines of the *Memoires du Diable*, of Soubié; the countesses of the *Compagnon du tour de France*, of George Sand; or of the *Mysteries of Paris*, of Eugene Sue. I am fully convinced that they who write such books, are only acquainted with one portion of the world, which they boldly call, *modern society!*

But when we consider the immeasurable influence of such works; when we reflect that they form the intellectual nourishment of almost the whole youth of France; that three-fourths of the time they address those who can only view the world on its worst side, it is very easy to imagine the unconquerable antipathy which must arise in many hearts against the institution of Catholic marriage.

Besides, this institution, considered socially and morally, is often painted in the darkest colors by the new literature. One soon becomes accustomed to view it as a hopeless tyranny, as a crushing prejudice, and as the most cruel subjection of the heart and the reason. Then, the spirit of independence, which in youthful minds increases the influence of such books, the corrupting pictures with which they are filled, and the license of morals prevailing in them, inspire a taste for an unrestrained libertinism, which will no longer submit to the strict bondage of Catholic marriage. The female readers of George Sand and Daniel Stern, soon require *the friends* of Madame de Warens, or the *liberal* manners of an Adrienne de Cardoville; and those of the other sex, the light loves of a Saint Simonian society, or the license of the phalanstery.

But I must turn my eyes towards a higher sphere. Far from this thick and corrupted atmosphere, a child is born This young girl learns on her mother's knees that there is a God who reads the conscience to its lowest depths, and who curses the impure of heart. She is often taught that her destiny is to love God, and to sacrifice to the imperative law of duty. A firm and gentle hand keeps far removed from her eyes all the scandals of human weakness, and from her ears, every word which is not as pure

as the purest of heavens. She does not study the true science of life and the law of duty in your immodest books; she looks to the Gospel for instruction in her sacred rights and obligations.

The young girl matures, as the flower hidden in the forest expands beneath the eye of God. We feel on seeing her all the sublimity of her moral dignity, and that she may become a truly Christian woman. Vice blushes and bows before her. She bears stamped on her noble and elevated brow, such unmistakable marks of modesty, that we admire by simply seeing her, and divine at once the holiness of her heart, and the moral grandeur of her being. She has never been told by her mother that life is to be a perpetual delirium of love, a sweet dream of the early spring. On the contrary, she has often repeated to her that one single and solid affection is to fill her life, and that every woman who abandons herself to the inclinations of her heart, loses with her purity the repose and glory of her being.

In time, she becomes a wife and mother, and the husband of her choice will not have passed his fairest years among degraded women. She could never confide to so debased a soul, the treasure of her chastity,* and the guardianship of her happiness.

* Tertullian eloquently expresses this doctrine. "The faithful wife," says he, "is bound to obey the law of

The husband whom she chooses will have served his apprenticeship to his duties as a father, by a strict, continent, and laborious youth. These two hearts are united by a perfect esteem, by an entire harmony of feelings and opinions, by an affection stronger, deeper, and more enduring than that which is called by worldlings, *love*. Such are the beginnings of Catholic marriage, a social marvel, which the Gospel alone could have presented to the veneration of the world.

God, to reward the heroic chastity of Christian woman, has confided to her the glorious mission of saving the modern world, which is fast falling into a state of corruption, which is eaten up with selfishness, and infected by the plague of immorality.

"Only one half of official society is lost," as the most spirited writer of the nineteenth century very eloquently remarks: "the other half is as yet safe. God in His prescient wisdom, has ordained that what perished through man, should be saved through woman.

God; married to a husband who does not respect it, how can she at the same time serve God and her husband? Through deference for the latter, must she then adopt profane customs, must she consent to worldly dress and every vanity, must she be the slave of his lascivious caprices, and to please him must she even stain the sanctity of the nuptial bed?"—("Ad Uxorem," lib. II, cap IV.)

"Women have retained that virility of soul which has no sex, and which men have lost amid the vagaries of doubt and materialism. Women have assumed over their husbands that species of empire which firm minds always exercise over weak. Women teach their young sons those divine lessons in morality and religion, which colleges and universities cannot entirely efface; women cannot disbelieve, because they need strength for themselves, and for others.

"Official man, absorbed by continued and violent self-love, does not know the people, he does not study, nor does he visit, aid, and serve them, he does not bear them in his heart, nor has he them even upon his lips.

"But his wife comes into contact with the people at all points,—with the old men on their truckle beds, with their wives in sickness, with their young maidens, their little children, their miseries, their hunger, their wounds, their despair, and their souls. She approaches them by the labor she procures for them, by the education she gives them, by the bodily wounds she dresses, by the clothes with which she covers them, by the money which, unperceived, she places in their hands, by her woman's words, the sweetest that the heart of the poor can hear, and by that maternal, unresting, inventive, devoted, and

unsparing tenderness, which religion alone inspires, and which hides in the bosom of God, the secret of its recompense.

"Yes, charity, that sublime charity which man does not practise, maintains a living faith continually within the heart of woman.

"Let her then leave to man gold, power, stock-jobbing, and sophistry! Let her retain the moral government of minds, that government which is the most evident sign of beings created by God in His image! The men of the world have abdicated the command of their species: it is the woman's part to reassume, and exercise it at the fireside, with the holy authority of a wife and a mother.

"If I had a wish to make, it would be that the women of the world would read and reread what I have here written, for I shall not be understood by the men of the world, but the women of the world will comprehend me, and Christian women will confirm my testimony when I say, that Providence has raised them up to save society.

"Let women remember that they must answer to this society before God for the primary education of their sons, and for the entire education of their daughters.

"Oh! why have I not, while addressing their reason, that victorious force of logic which triumphs in

the contest of opinions! Why have I not, while addressing their heart, that persuasive grace which overflows from the lips of eloquence!

"I am aware that unheard-of efforts have been made, and are still making, to degrade the morality of the family. Man has been corrupted, and now endeavors are not wanting to corrupt woman, but she has resisted, and will resist. She will cling to religion amid this worldly society which is tottering and crumbling in all its parts; and, in order to raise it up again, she will remain erect in the midst of ruin."—(De Cormenin, *Feu! Feu!)*

CHAPTER VIII.

THE RATIONALISTIC MARRIAGE.

The weakening of the marriage bond destroys the very foundation of the family; and if the family totter on its base, what is to become of society?—*(Saint-Marc Girardin.)*

But what voices trembling with rage, greet my ears?

It is true, say these voices, the Gospel was, in the beginning, an exceedingly liberal doctrine. It

has, more than any other system, contributed to shake on their ancient and venerated bases, the fatal institution of castes, and the dangerous domination of theocracies. But now, the social organisation framed by the strong hands of Christianity, is crumbling into ruin. You are right in saying, that the whole of Christian society rests upon the institution of Catholic marriage; but that is precisely the institution whose legitimacy, liberality, and morality is disputed. As serfdom slowly brought about the abolition of slavery in its most oppressive forms, so has the Gospel, by breaking the pagan tyranny which weighed upon woman, gradually prepared the way for her entire emancipation. Fourier was one of the first of those who in this XIXth century, pretend to emancipate women by the most unrestrained licentiousness. M. Lerminier, who was not then a *conservative*, addressed these astounding words to the author of *Lelia:* "Do not descend from the sublime boldness of thy genius, restore the laws of love and *marriage*."—*(Au dela du Rhin)* M. Eugene Sue, in the *Wandering Jew*, has only reproduced the theory of Fourier. The simple admirers of that work have not perceived, that over the shoulders of the Jesuits, the author makes war on the whole social order established by Christianity: "You have already recognised, in the person of

Adrienne de Cardoville, the anticipated personification of the woman of the phalanstery. . . . Adrienne de Cardoville has all the principles of the sect, and we plainly see that the poor child had read Fourier over M. Sue's shoulder, or over that of his associate. Consequently, she professes the doctrines of the founder of the phalanstery with regard to marriage. She has had 'splendid visions' of the future; she has breathed a free, pure, and invigorating atmosphere. '*Oh! above all free and generous to the soul.*' She has seen her noble sisters worthy and sincere, *because they were free;* cherished and respected, '*because they could unclasp from a disloyal hand, a hand loyally given*,' etc. . . . Alas! the sun was thirty centuries younger when the wise man said: 'There is nothing new under the sun.' If the theory of this strange system of morals be new, the practice is not so."—(NETTEMENT, *Etudes critiques*, 1. *Le Juif Errant.)*

All these silly extravagances had been proclaimed by the Saint-Simonians some time before the author of the *Wandering Jew* undertook to promulgate them.—(See Bonnetty, *Histoire du Saint-Simonisme*, in the *Annales de philosophie Chretienne*, 1st series, XI, 338.)

It is true that these opinions are not shared by all the adversaries of Christian purity; but if the

school which holds them, is not the most numerous, it certainly possesses the greatest power of logic, and at times, the magic of a truly impassioned eloquence. In fact, let it be once admitted that *feeling* is the law of the moral world, let the imprescriptible rights of *love* be established as a principle, and all the variable tendencies of the human heart be declared sacred and inviolable, and by what right can men preach to women a morality, which they do not accept for themselves, which they declare *impracticable*, as well as *absurd?* The politicians of the *sentimental school* have, in reality, two weights, and two measures. Through inconsequence or hypocrisy, they use Catholic morality against the liberty of women, at the very time that they brand it as an odious tyranny, or a vulgar prejudice, with regard to all that concerns themselves. The partisans of "*free marriage*" have, like them, embraced the opinions prohibited by Rousseau, in that book of *Confessions*, still more profoundly revolutionary than the *Social Contract* We must confess, that the Genevan philosopher has shown himself more candid and consistent than the greater number of his followers. In truth, if he had no great scruples with regard to adultery, and if, notwithstanding the frequent commission of this anti-social crime, he audaciously ventured to propose himself for the admi-

ration of posterity, he did not, at the same time, hesitate in recommending to the ardent sympathy of his readers, some of the women who had shared in his excesses.

A woman, I blush to say it, a woman has dared to push the consequences of this odious logic to their ultimate limits. Unveiling the mysteries of her soul before the eyes of the whole of France, she has openly attacked the great institution of Catholic marriage. The writer of whom we speak, is a most powerful and serious adversary; she appears convinced, because she is impassioned. One would say that she only permits a cry of anguish to escape from her heart which she can no longer restrain; she is not armed with abuse, but with lamentations; she does not seem to ask for liberty, but merely for a little peace, air, and light. Nevertheless, while appearing to give the simple history of the sufferings of her life, she well knows how, by turns, to soften and to irritate. She performs the office of a tribune, while assuming the air of a victim. No one had previously seized, with such subtle and ingenious art, upon the weak and vulnerable points of an institution encircled, during so many centuries, by the love and respect of Christian generations. Who was ever able more skilfully to mingle the true and the false, the probable and the cer-

tain? Who could more dexterously transform individual abuses, into a general law? Thus, this writer fascinates, like a serpent, all who do not reflect deeply. Besides, we can see from the boldness of her ideas, the vigor of her style, and the brilliant coloring of her expositions, that she is but the eloquent and sympathetic echo of all those burning souls who, living in the midst of a selfish and disorderly society, have felt the same griefs, and experienced the same sorrows. The great power of revolutionary writers does not lie in their talent alone, but also in a position of society, whose dangers, evils, and sufferings they simply relate.

We have no hesitation in confessing, that the greater part of the objections presented by George Sand, cannot be considered as the mere product of a sickly imagination.

We do not pretend to be the apologists for a society which too often tramples under foot the rights of the weak, and the holy morality of the Gospel. We are not called upon to defend "this society, without faith, without courage, without principles, without hope, without greatness, without a symbol, without harmony, without a present, and without a future. What is, in fact, this world? What is meant by the world in its own language? Simply, that conventional society which laughs, drinks, gam-

blas, enjoys, and blasphemes."—(De Cormenin, *Feu! Feu!)* But let us hear a man who will not be accused of ultramontanism: "Since Philosophism, that inevitable and hideous consequence of Lutheranism, has, while preaching incredulity, stretched a funeral pall between heaven and earth, and deprived mankind of the divine light, men, believing the heavens desolate, because they were veiled to their eyes, have crept miserably about in the midst of a false and mournful twilight. And then, having no longer a heaven to contemplate, they have been forced to bow their heads and bend their eyes upon the earth. . . . Being employed only in hating and enjoying each other, they surveyed and looked upon each other face to face . . . . man has voluntarily scrutinised the heart of his brother man, and has labored to analyse it, fibre by fibre. He has shrunk back dismayed, for his discoveries have been fearful; he has seen in others, a repetition of what he found in himself, pride, hatred, and malice. And as a holy and salutary faith is no longer present to change these organic vices of our nature into resignation, love and charity, through the hope, or the fear, of eternal reward, or punishment; and as man no longer offers to God those perfidies, deceptions and tortures which He has commanded him to bear with humility, in order that

these woes might one day be placed to his account, man, believing in himself alone, and being unwilling to confide his vengeance to the chances of a divine justice, has rendered his brother man deception for deception, perfidy for perfidy, and torture for torture." Is it a Jesuit who speaks thus? No, it is the author of the *Wandering Jew!*—(EUGENE SUE, *la Vigie de Koat*, *Ven*, Preface.)

One of the apostles of Saint-Simonism answered by a bitter picture, the men of political power whom he accused of immorality: "The Deputies, grave personages, whose authority may not be gainsayed, have voted this very year, during the same session, less than 800,000 francs to the Bishops, and nearly a million to the Opera. This deserves reflection, for the Opera is a sensual exhibition, etc. . . .; and the Opera, doubtless pleases the taste of many persons, since the Deputies, in the distribution of the funds, bestow a larger portion on its dancers and singers, than on the Bishops of the whole kingdom."—(*Proces des Saint-Simoniens*, 138.) We cannot here quote, on account of its length, the admirable picture drawn by one of our adversaries, M. Pierre Leroux, of the existing state of society, corrupted by the twofold passion for gold and pleasure. Copious extracts from its eloquent pages may be found in the *Annales de philosophie Chretienne*, a

collection containing many matters of the highest importance in the defence of the Catholic faith, and which is directed by a man, to whose science M. Saisset himself, has rendered homage, in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*.

But is it just, is it rational, to attribute to us the responsibility of abuses which we anathematise, and unceasingly condemn with the whole force of our ministry, and the energy of our Christian convictions? Is it we, whose hands have fashioned that "*pays legal*," which avariciously metes out to us light and life?* Is it we, who have inspired the middle class, whom you almost continually delineate, with their rage for pleasure, and their passion for gold? Is it from us, that the world has learned to trade in consciences, and to buy with gold, the most holy and venerable things? You say that for some miserable advantages of fortune, pure and innocent young girls are sacrificed to the lubricity of old men, ruined by war or by debauch; as formerly, unoffending children were burned on pagan altars, in honor of the infernal gods.

The Saint-Simonists, in order to reply to the objection of having attacked an institution so preeminently social as marriage, have made answer,

* All this was written just before the French Revolution of 1848.

that this institution ought to disappear, because it is deeply degraded and corrupted: "There, the candidates for the marriage relation," says one of their advocates, "recommended by their personal advantages, their position, their fortune or their expectations, are put up at auction, and knocked down to the highest bidder! For this traffic there are bureaux of commission and brokerage in all public places, in the studios, and in the drawing-rooms. Sonorious titles, obscure birth, unmortgaged lands, burdened property, unstained fame, blemished reputation, virtues, vices, graces of person, secret or visible deformities, age of parents, the retainers of an impatiently-waited-for inheritance, number of coheirs, robust or feeble health of both, all is weighed and estimated. By turns they exact, cheapen, haggle, affect disdain for the object to be sold, know where they can find better, go off, are called back, agree and embrace, each one slyly laughing over his good bargain. Age and youth, beauty and deformity, intellect and folly, the most antagonistic or indifferent sentiments, dare, without blushing for their mutual deceit and sordid venality, to make mutual alliances, provided that money makes good these defects in harmony. There, the notary is the great pontiff of matrimony; the signing of the contract is the most imposing ceremony; the rest is a mere

formality. Marriage has publicly entered into the domain of speculation, and all this passes for rational, decent, and honest; to act otherwise, is to shock common sense by the impertinence of passion and folly."—(See *Proces de Saint-Simoniens*, 207.)

But in what book, in what catechism, in what pulpit, have we counselled, or recommended such unions? Are we responsible for those hateful calculations of avarice, for those unions, which I willingly stigmatise as revolting, and which violate every natural instinct, as well as all the counsels of the Gospel? The middle class, you say, sell their daughters, and you call that in your coarse language, a *legal prostitution!* But did we teach them to read Diderot and Voltaire? Did they learn from us to turn every thing into gold, even conscience and liberty? The Church can only answer for her own deeds.

Now, hear what the Catholic doctors say concerning those shameful bargains, pompously called, *marriages of reason.*

"Marriage," exclaims St. John Chrysostom, "is one of the most surprising mysteries, by reason of the sublime character which belongs to it, of representing the alliance of Jesus Christ with His Church. The necessary consequence of which is, that it should not be contracted lightly and through interested mo-

tives. No, *marriage is no bargain;* it is the union of the entire life. Nothing is more common than to hear it said: Such a one has made a marriage which has suddenly enriched him. '*He only married his wife for her money.*' What language! A wife for money! . . . *Wo to him who only marries for money!* How many rich men, married to wealthy wives, have lost their repose by increasing their fortune! How many of the poor, married to poor girls, pass their days in happiness and tranquillity. It is not then riches, which are to be considered in marriage; it is virtue, goodness, and frugality. With these qualities, a woman, even if she be poor, will render you happy. Poverty will injure her less than riches. Without them, even had she brought you the largest dowry, farewell to peace and happiness, for a storm will rage, which will ravage and destroy all in an instant."*

Our popular theology contains the same counsels.

But there are, you say, in the higher classes of society, many unions originating in levity, and of which vanity alone forms and binds the heavy and galling fetters. A man, proud of a noble name,

* Saint Chrysostom, "Laus Maximi," No. 4. The same doctor elsewhere recommends mothers to bring up their daughters with a contempt for riches and vanity.—("Homilia XI in I, ad Timotheum.")

but without heart or conscience, brings, as a portion, to his young wife, a blighted mind, and a disenchanted soul. He laughs in his sleeve at the fidelity promised before God, and before the law. I can fully understand how such a manner of acting, at once selfish and despicable, should have given rise to a book such as *Valentine*, the stormy protest of a discontented and suffering soul, or to so distressing a picture as that of *Mathilde* by M. Eugene Sue.* But is Catholicity to be made answerable for the fatal results of such unions? Are those marriages which you have pictured with such dark and gloomy colors, *truly Christian*? I repeat, that we are not responsible for evils of which we are entirely innocent, since we condemn the hateful calculations of vanity, as well as the infamous speculations of avarice. Is it we who have infused into those souls, now without warmth or life, apathy and death? Is it we who have blasted and rendered them forever incapable of affection and happiness? With you, we cannot see without antipathy and disgust, the strongest and holiest of loves, after that due to God and our native land, transformed into a vulgar con-

* See George Sand, "Valentine;" Eugene Sue, "Mathilde."—In this work, M. Eugene Sue skilfully and insidiously began that war against marriage, which he has since continued, amid so much applause, in the "Mysteries of Paris," and the "Wandering Jew."

ventionalism. We know as well as you, yea, better than you, the greatness of man's destiny, and we should blush to find attributed to us, the prejudices of those who are governed, not by the precepts of the Gospel, but by the opinions of a world condemned by Jesus Christ, and for which he refused to raise his voice in prayer towards his Father.

Can we be truly accused of encouraging and nourishing the abuses of worldly vanity? Have we not again and again repeated, that the world is governed by the genius of evil? Did not our Divine Saviour himself, so good and so tender, drop these fearful words from his sacred lips: "Woe to the world!" At the very moment when he was to be bound to the cross, when he was pardoning his executioners, he refused to pray for the world. His Apostles were not less inflexible. St. Paul declared, that if he were pleasing to the world, he would cease to consider himself a servant of Jesus Christ. The Apostle of charity, he who during the Last Supper had reposed upon the sacred bosom of the Saviour, and who had been sprinkled with His blood beneath the tree of the cross, often repeated to the Christians of the primitive Church: "My little children, love not the world."*

* We only here very superficially touch upon the great question of THE WORLD. We have treated it

The world has then its laws and ideas, detested and condemned by the Church, and for which she is in no way responsible. If in certain circumstances, in order to satisfy the demands of selfishness and vanity, no qualities of the heart, no upright sentiments, no delicacy of character be required in a husband, it is to the world, and not to Christ, that we must impute these sad unions, and the open scandals which, almost always, are their inevitable consequences. Valentine becomes an adulteress; but have you not yourself confessed, that the Countess of Raimbaut, her worthless mother, had an egotistical and petrified soul, and a heart, cold and without devotion; in a word, that she was supereminently a woman of the world? Put in the place of this miserable woman, a Christian mother, a woman who makes the study of her children the most pleasurable occupation of her life; who regards the happiness of her daughters as a portion of her own, and Valentine would never have married a faithless, heartless, and pitiless diplomatist. You may believe it, there are many such women even among countesses, and if true religion be rare, yet, even amid the highest classes of society, God has still

---

more at length in the "Manual of a Christian Woman," and in "Woman in her Relations with the World." [Works we hope hereafter to translate.]

preserved in our beautiful France, many angels of virtue, who form the purest and holiest crown of our glorious country.

You may add to all these difficulties that, in the eyes of the world, the obligation of marriage is only really binding on one of the parties It is true that the law exacts from both a fidelity enduring until death; but the culpable tolerance of opinion soon frees the husband from such burdensome vows. After some years, some months perhaps, he easily breaks the fragile tie of conjugal fidelity undisturbed, to satisfy the caprices of his heart and imagination. But the wife, a captive to opinion, still remains fettered by eternal bonds. She has still a husband; but that spouse whose outraging infidelity she may readily suspect, will never be for her a confidant, a consoler, or even a friend. In the midst of the dreary solitude of her heart and soul, she will be forbidden even to dream a few moments in secret of an inconstancy, of which he may be guilty without the lightest scruple.

There is nothing exaggerated in this picture; we might even employ darker shades. But can you seriously call upon us to answer, with regard to this century, for the morality of the sons of Voltaire? It is not we who have brought up this youth, "the worst youth that France has seen for fifty years," to

use the well known expression of a great writer.—(De Cormenin, *Feu ! Feu !* p. 15.) This spirited author draws a portrait of our youth, which contrasts strikingly with what he says of the virtues of Christian women : "If you have any desire to know what they have learned in the way of morals and religion, have the kindness to question the students themselves, as they are descending the steps of the Sarbonne, with their bachelor's diploma under their arms, and you will see what they will answer :

"Mr. Bachelor, to whom I make my bow, what know you of religion ?—Nothing.

"Do you occasionally go to church ?—Never.

"What are your deeds of charity ?—None.

"What do you in the morning ?—I smoke.

"And in the evening ?—I polke.

"Very good. You see how candidly I am answered by the newly received Bachelors." They make a mockery, you say, of the most sacred oaths ? But, to keep an oath, one must believe in God ! They have, say you again, abused your simplicity by fair promises in happier days ? Had you not been taught that, without religion, there can be neither solid integrity, nor certain promises ? You have feared, perhaps, the tedium of a too serious husband, permit me the expression, the inconveniences of a too Christian marriage ! But now you

experience only the consequences of your own system! You need not fear that your husband will ever fatigue you by his constancy! You will never be called upon to suffer from the severity of his virtue!*

In the Church, all is otherwise ordered; Catholicity exacts from the husband a fidelity as strict and severe as he demands from his wife. The Catholic doctrine is inflexible on this point; it has never taxed with exaggeration, but, on the contrary, has applauded, these words of one of the most eloquent doctors of the first ages of Christianity: "The laws of the Gentiles," says St. John Chrysostom, "ordain the most severe penalties against the woman guilty of adultery, but threaten none against the faithless husband. But I would cite to you the law of God, which condemns both equally. St. Paul not only says, 'Let every woman have her own husband;' but he adds, 'Let the husband render the

* M. de Balzac, in "The Virtuous Woman," has attempted to describe with detailed malignity, all the inconveniences of a Catholic marriage. His virtuous woman is a native of Bayeux, somewhat silly, tolerably ridiculous, and entirely without tact, who makes her husband detest morality, Catholicity, and Bayeux. All those who have known Christian women, (M. de Balzac perhaps never having had that happiness,) are aware, that, even in lower Normandy, they bear but a slight resemblance to Madame de Granville.

debt to his wife.' Is this a question of purely exterior duties? No; the duty of which he speaks, is that of continence and chastity; it is reciprocal. There is neither privilege nor dispensation for the man; equally guilty, he is equally to be punished. What! your wife has left her father, her mother, and her whole family, to be united to you; and she is to become the victim of your brutality, to have before her eyes the insolent triumph of a rival, and to be a prey to endless strife? She gave herself to you on the condition of becoming your companion, free and honored, and not your slave. The law does not permit you to alienate her dowry; and will you be permitted to steal from her what is of so much more value to her than her whole portion, her husband, his heart and his person! You belong to her, your chastity and modesty are her property which you can never alienate. If you fail in the duty of chastity, you must render a strict account to God who instituted marriage, and who has only given you your wife in trust."*

† St. John Chrysostom, "In illud propter fornicationes uxorum," No. 4.

CHAPTER IX.

MARRIAGE AND LIBERTY.

WOMAN WALKS BY MAN'S SIDE, LIKE WEAKNESS SUPPORTED BY STRENGTH.—(*Mgr. Giraud.*)

If we are not responsible for the abuses introduced into marriage by rationalistic habits and ideas, it is but just to require from us a refutation of the objections which are made to the institution itself, by those who accept, with its ultimate consequences, the sentimental theory which it is the aim of this work to combat. The fairness which we desire to preserve, obliges us to make this confession to our readers: we have, until now, solved only the lighter difficulties of this great problem. We are not of those who would sustain truth by petty tricks, or by ingenious stratagems. The morality of the Gospel appears to us so perfectly beautiful and invulnerable, that we have full confidence in our power of defending it against the most formidable adversaries.

We shall meet again on this ground, the powerful antagonist with whom we have so often entered the lists. In *Indiana* and in *Valentine*, as we have

already remarked, the eloquent author had only given utterance to the cries of the victims; she had given an energetic tongue to the profound melancholy of the poor souls sacrificed to the mean and petty passions which, almost without restraint, govern modern society. The great success of these first two works, filled the author with audacity and hope. Her first accents were only a timid protest, and were partly stifled by a remnant of Catholic modesty. But in *Jacques*, the case is altered; the skilful imitator of Rousseau has already surpassed her master. The philosophy of the *Confessions* is so far developed, and has grown so bold, that it offers to establish the family on an entirely new basis. *Consuelo*, by consecrating the imprescriptible rights of the heart and of love, shatters the whole system of the old society in order to replace it by the triple law of pleasure, fraternity, and liberty!

Does any one imagine that these ideas excite around us the just reprobation with which they should be stricken? Did not the *pays legal*, which seemed to mistrust the views of George Sand, permit the same paradoxes to pass, without any serious protest, in the pages of the *Constitutionnel*? Did not Adrienne de Cardoville, popularised by the *Wandering Jew*, reiterate all the objections of the

author of *Jacques* against the profoundly social institution of Catholic marriage? Have not these truly specious difficulties left a vague and ill-defined agitation in a great number of minds? Do they not endeavor to make Christian women believe that the protection accorded by the Church, is only a hypocritical patronage, and that she conspires with their oppressors to rivet, in the name of conscience, those fetters, which so cruelly wound so many souls?

It is essential to remark, in the beginning of this discussion, that we have never represented marriage as a state destined to confer upon woman an absolute independence, an unmixed happiness, or an ever-pure and serene tranquillity. Have we ever said that the wife and mother is to endure no suffering? If some unreflecting writers, in *pious romances*, have shown women Catholic marriage as a foretaste of the joys of Paradise, can we be made responsible for these puerile eccentricities, if they are positively discountenanced by those great theologians, who join to the knowledge of our doctrines, a profound insight into human nature? The true interpreters of the Gospel never present thus to the imagination, the deceitful baits of pleasure. But as our adversaries will not fail to say, that we suppose in our doctors ideas favorable to the exigencies of our situation, we will let them speak for them-

selves: it is not however useless to remark, that as hey were much more skilful observers of human nature than our modern writers, it has not escaped their penetrating minds, that the bondage weighs almost as heavily on the husband, as on the wife.

"The bond of marriage," said a great bishop, "is indissoluble; it is an eternal servitude. It is rightly called a bond, and a chain, not only on account of the endless troubles and difficulties caused by it, but also, because it subjects the two spouses to a reciprocal dependence, the most useful of all. St. Paul says, it is true, that the husband has authority over his wife; but this authority does not free him from the duty of serving her. They are two slaves bound with the same chain, and one cannot move without the other."—(St. Chrysostom, *In illud propter fornicationes uxorum.*)

"Ask, behold, and listen," energetically exclaims Bossuet: "what find you in every family, in even the best assorted marriages, if not pain, contradictions, and anguish? These are the tribulations of which the Apostle speaks; and he spoke not in vain. The world speaks of it yet more than he; the whole of human nature is in a state of suffering. Let us say nothing of households filled with scandalous dissensions; let us consider the most orderly; no unhappiness is apparent, but to avoid open and real

difficulties how much must not the husband and wife suffer from each other?

"They are both equally reasonable, if you will; a case very rare, and scarcely to be hoped for; but each has his or her humors, habits, prejudices, and social connections. Whatever agreement may subsist between them, their natures are always sufficiently opposed to cause a frequent contrariety in so long and intimate an association: they see each other so familiarly, so often, with so many mutual defects, without disguise, and in the most unexpected circumstances, when there has been an impossibility of preparation; they become weary, the taste palls, imperfection repels, and their humanity makes itself more and more felt; both must continually strive to overcome their own natures, and must hide the amount of their struggles; by turns they seek to effect changes in each other, and must perceive their reciprocal repugnance. Complaisance diminishes, the heart grows dry; they become a mutual cross; they may perhaps love their cross; but it is not the less, a cross to be borne. Often, duty is the only bond which holds them together, or perhaps, a cold esteem, or a spiritless and languid friendship, which is only aroused upon extraordinary occasions. Daily intercourse has lost nearly all its sweetness; the heart finds but little comfort in it; it is rather

a community of interest, a bond of honor, a faithful connection, than a cordial and sensitive friendship. Let us even suppose this vivid affection; what can it do? Where will it end? It causes in the two, troubles, sensibilities, and alarms. Even they cannot escape sorrow, for one will finally be almost inconsolable at the death of the other; so that, there are in human life no more grievous sufferings, than those caused by the best marriage in the world."—(Bossuet, *Sermon on the Obligations of the Religious State.)*

Bourdaloue, who joined to so much experience, such profound knowledge of evangelical doctrines, does not employ less sombre colors in painting the servitude of marriage:

"I have said, and I repeat: the fact that marriage is a sacrament, is the cause of its excellence, and its most noble prerogative in the law of grace; but it is at the same time the reason of its servitude; and why? Because it is its sacramental quality which renders it indissoluble, and consequently a yoke, and a subjection, like to a state of slavery, wherein man renounces his liberty. Now this, Christians, is what I call a true bondage, and so it is in fact. For, I ask you: is not a condition which subjects you, you scarcely know to whom, and which you have no power to change, in some considerable

degree the condition of a slave? Now, marriage does all this. It subjects you to another than yourself, and this is the essential point; to another, who had no power over you, but on whom you are now dependent, and who has acquired an inalienable right over your person. By the priesthood I am only bound to God and to myself: to God, my sovereign Master, to whom I already owed obedience; to myself, who should naturally be my own guide and ruler. But by marriage, you transfer the power you have over yourself, to another.

"Although association, considered in itself, has always been regarded as a good, yet by reason of the extreme difficulty of finding minds which harmonise and mutually suit each other, we may say that, ordinarily, solitude is preferable. We can scarcely suffer ourselves; will another be more easy to bear with? I do not speak of the thousand vexing affairs which the association and community of marriage bring. These are only the accidents of your condition, but they are so universal, that even the marriages of kings and princes are not exempt from them. I will only allude to the diversity of character which is often found between a husband and a wife. What a cross and trial! What an occasion for mortification and patience! A sensible and modest husband, with a volatile and dissipated

wife; a well regulated and virtuous wife, with a libertine and impious husband. Of the many marriages, every day contracted, how many are there wherein sympathy of heart can be found? And if there be antipathy, can a more cruel martyrdom be imagined?"—(BOURDALOUE, *Dominicale*, Sermon on the Marriage State.)

We are, then, far from concealing all the difficulties and contrarieties which weigh upon the married pair. We are too well acquainted with human nature, to be liable to deception on this point. The adversaries of the institution which we would defend, have scarcely said anything stronger than the profound theologians we have just quoted. We think it not difficult to prove to them, that the Church, while exacting inviolable vows from women, does not attempt to impose upon their credulity, or to mislead their weakness. The Catholic priesthood, in the functions of its sacred ministry, does not conceal from the children of the Church, the heavy responsibilities which the solemn and sacred bonds of marriage impose upon them.

But, our adversaries will answer, your concessions are too limited. You are satisfied with allowing that marriage is a heavy yoke for women, and a life of constant sacrifice and self-devotion. What you will not concede is, that it is an impossible, absurd, and tyrannical relation.

Is it really so? Is it true that Catholic marriage cannot be exculpated from the odious objections which have been urged against it? Is it true that woman is given up without security, protection, or defence, to the caprices of a brutal and arbitrary will? Such is certainly not the doctrine professed by Catholic theologians.

"The Gospel has proclaimed the liberty of woman, and the dignity of the wife," as has been well said by M. l'abbé Bautain; "for it teaches that woman, with regard to man; the wife, with regard to the husband, is a free being, a soul created and redeemed by God, and consequently, in intimate and personal relation with God. She is responsible for herself in all that concerns her salvation: she has an inner sanctuary, wherein no one but God has a right to enter; and if she passes into the state of marriage, she is only temporally united to man; she does not give her soul, which is the property of God; she surrenders neither her conscience, nor her faith; she concedes certain rights over her existence in this world, as well as receives others in return, but there is that which remains beyond the contract; all that which concerns the soul and eternity. This it is which constitutes the dignity and greatness of Christian woman. She gives herself freely, but never unreservedly; this reservation maintains the right

of God over her, guarantees the accomplishment of her chief duty; and in the accomplishment of this duty, consists her power in this world, and her salvation in the next."—(BAUTAIN, *Conferences de Notre-Dame.)*

Let no one imagine that this doctrine has been invented to satisfy the liberal ideas of the present age. The Fathers are still more positive and explicit. Listen:

"Do not confound *submission* with *slavery*," says St. John Chrysostom. "The woman obeys, but *remains free;* she is *equal* in honor. It is true that she is subject to her husband; and this is her punishment for having rendered herself guilty in the beginning. Mark it well: woman was not condemned to subjection at the time of her creation; when God made and presented her to her husband, He said nothing of domination; we hear nothing from the lips of Adam which supposes it. It was only after having violated her duty by leading him astray to whom she had been given as a support, that she heard these words: '*Thy desire shall be to thy husband!*'"

The eloquent doctor goes still further; he compares the obedience of the wife to the husband, to that which Jesus Christ rendered his Father, while he was laboring for the redemption of the world.

"If St. Paul," says he, "had intended to recommend an absolute dependence in the example which he adduces, he would not have spoken of the wife as owing submission to her husband, but as subjected to him, as the slave is to the will of his master. *Jesus Christ likewise obeyed his Father.*"*

The Church is not content with exacting from the husband that he respect the freedom of his wife:

* St. Chrysostom, "Homilia XXVI, in primam ad Corinthios." The eloquent Bishop of Constantinople, foreseeing the objections which might be made to the obedience of wives to their husbands, tries to exhibit the whole greatness and sublimity of an obedience which is really rendered, not to a man, but to God; and he clearly proves how the tribulations attached to that obedience, ennoble and elevate the character of the Christian woman: "Wives, if in the eyes of God you are subject to your husbands, do not object to me that they should do that which they do not; do not trouble yourselves beyond what is ordained by the lawgiver. What God desires of you is obedience to His law, whatever difficulties you may meet with: and herein consists the perfection of that obedience which you owe Him. To love one who loves you, is no great sacrifice, but to heap your cares upon one by whom you are not loved, is an effort of virtue, to which God has promised His reward. Learn then, Christian women, that you are not to wait for your husbands to be virtuous to become so yourselves. What would there be so wonderful in that? Each should begin by setting the example. If we are told to turn our cheek to the stranger who strikes us, how much more is not the wife bound to bear with the aberrations of her husband!"—(St. Chrysostom, Ib.)

she likewise requires, that he should have for her so strong, enduring, and disinterested an affection, that, finding no object for comparison in human things, she is forced to select, as the sublime type of this devotion, the love of Christ himself: "Husbands," says the Apostle of the Gentiles, "love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church, and delivered himself up for it: that he might sanctify it, and present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, nor any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

Developing this magnificent doctrine, St. Paul adds:

"So also ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever hateth his own flesh: but nourisheth and cherisheth it, as also Christ doth the Church Because we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother: and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh. This is a great sacrament: but I speak in Christ and in the Church."—(St. Paul, *Ephesians*, v, 22, 27 and 28–33.)

But let us penetrate into the very heart of the difficulty proposed to our consideration. There are, it is said, women, who by the delicacy of their mo-

ral organisation, will never bear the dependence of which we speak, let it be ever so mild. The lightest bonds seem to certain souls an overwhelming burden. Woman's nature, in some exceptional cases, rises to such a height of intellect and sensitiveness, that it ceases to be capable of accepting that subordination which constitutes the essence of Catholic marriage. Think you there are not also women athirst for the ideal; who are crushed by the common-place of ordinary affections; who would go beyond that narrow circle of iron traced round them by domestic cares? Give to such natures as good, kind, and conscientious a husband as you will, do you think he can ever satisfy the ardent longings of their mind and heart? Do you think they can find in the family, the realisation of the brilliant dream caressed by them from the earliest years of infancy? Do you not believe that they will constantly feel cruel disappointments, infinite tortures, and the deepest anguish? If marriage suits certain humble, gentle, and patient women, it certainly does not accord with those exceptional organisations, filled with movement and passion, with those intelligences of fire which, by their activity, would inflame the whole of nature!

What constitutes the grandeur of the Catholic doctrine is, that it harmonises with all the moral

requirements and exigencies, of superior minds. The Church is not like paganism, which imprisons all hearts within the same inflexible circle; she knows of a vocation, higher than that of the family; of a destiny, more sublime than that of a mother; and of a happiness, more ideal than that of the domestic fireside. She so fully avows that all women were not intended for the subjection of marriage, that, from St. Paul,* down to the Council of

* The words of the Heaven-inspired Apostle merit the most serious attention. They are, besides, only a commentary on the doctrine of his Divine Master.—Mathew, xix, 11, 12. "I would," says St. Paul to his brethren, "that all men were even as myself (that is to say unmarried); but every one hath his proper gift from God; one after this manner, and another after that. But I say to the unmarried: it is good for them if they so continue, even as I . . . I think therefore that this is good for the present necessity, that it is good for a man so to be. Art thou bound to a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife." And the same with regard to women. "He that giveth his virgin in marriage, doth well: and he that giveth her not, doth better. A woman is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth: but if her husband die, she is at liberty: let her marry to whom she will: only in the Lord. But more blessed shall she be, if she so remain, according to my counsel: and I think that I also have the Spirit of God."—St. Paul, 1st Corinthians, vii, 7, 8, 26, 27, 38, 39, 40.

Trent,† she has ever recommended celibacy to all souls which were not made for the confined atmosphere of common life. We can no longer be surprised that the greatest saints found in the hearts of women a sympathetic echo to their noblest projects. Some heroic virgins have played so wonderful a part, that they have occasionally eclipsed by the sublimity of their devotion, and the power of their intellect, the renown of the most illustrious men. A St. Catherine of Sienna was the light of doctors, the ambassadress of nations, the counsellor of Popes, and the admiration of her age ‡ A St. Rose of Viterbo, a charming and graceful child, became the intrepid buckler of the Papacy against the pretensions of the Ghibelline emperors. A St. Clara, by her ardent love for the poor and the Cross, was worthy of aiding the Seraph of Assisi in his

† The following definition was given by the Church in the holy Council of Trent: "If any one say that it is *better* or *more blessed*, to be united in matrimony, than to remain in a state of celibacy; let him be anathema!" The Council merely repeated the doctrine of the Fathers, whose profound philosophy on this point, merits the most serious attention from reflecting minds.

‡ See "Legende de Sainte Catherine," Florence 1477; Jean Pius, "Vie de Sainte Catherine;" Jean de Rechac, "Vie de Sainte Catherine;" Chavin de Malan, "Sainte Catherine de Sienne."

admirable reform.§ A St. Theresa astonished the world by the grandeur of her character in the age of the Loyolas, the Xaviers, and the Francis Borgias.|| Do not then reproach us with having forced a destiny of mediocricy upon women. We have likewise liberty for them;¶ but they can only acquire it through devotion and self-sacrifice You say, that it is a slavery to belong to men; the Church does not forbid you to devote yourself to God. If you will belong neither to God nor to

---

§ Chavin de Malan, "Histoire de Saint Francois d'Assise."

|| St. Theresa, her Life (written by herself). Villefore, "Vie de Sainte Therese."

¶ The question of virginity has profound analogies with that of Christian purity; but we cannot treat it here, on account of its vast extent. We may perhaps, at some future time, return to it. We will content ourselves, for the present, with quoting these noble words from Bossuet, which strengthen all we have said of the close relations between virginity and liberty. "You have heard the Apostle who says: 'I would have you to be without solicitude.' And again: 'They who enter into the bonds of marriage shall have tribulation of the flesh.' You see that chastity is no severe and heavy yoke, no painful and rigorous state; it is, on the contrary, a peaceful and sweet exemption from the gnawing cares and bitter tribulations which afflict men in marriage. Marriage is holy, honorable, and without stain, according to the doctrine of the Apostle; but

men, if you desire neither freedom nor marriage, will you dare to ask for license?

What do I say? Have you not already dared to ask for license, in the name of oppressed woman, as one of her imprescriptible rights? This is the sad remedy you have found for the evils of matrimony! This is the shameful means by which you would regenerate the laws of love and marriage! And here shines forth the superiority of Catholic morality. Try then to throw it aside without falling into anarchy! Endeavor to find, out of the institutions sanctioned by it, something which is neither confusion nor license. If you will have neither pagan servitude, virginal celibacy, nor Christian mar-

---

according to the same Apostle, there is another path more pure and more peaceful, that of holy virginity. It is permitted to seek a remedy for the infirmity of the flesh; but happy is he who has no need of so doing, and who can conquer it! For it is the cause of many pangs to him who can only partially overcome it. O, holy virginity, happy the chaste doves who fly on the wings of divine love, to seek their delights in the desert! O chosen and well beloved souls, to whom it is given to live independent of the flesh! They have a Spouse who can never die, in whom they will never see the shadow of an imperfection, who loves them, and renders them blessed through his love. They have nothing to fear, except not to love him enough, or to love that which he does not love."—Bossuet, "Sermon on the Obligations of the Religious State."

riage, nothing remains to you but licentiousness, which your poetical imagination may crown as you might a miserable beggar with flowers and garlands, but whose shameful nudity you can never conceal. You do not perceive, that under the pretext of progress and liberty, you propose to Christian woman, to abdicate her dignity as a wife and mother, and to reassume the degraded position of the Lamias and Phrynes, from which the purity inculcated by the Gospel, seemed to have forever rescued her. Now, if the woman, baptised in the Church, and regenerated by the blood of the Saviour, can listen to such perfidious counsels, she will never find any other liberty than that of the Greek courtesan, to replace the glorious self-devotion, and the holy mission, imposed upon her by Catholicity.

Besides, let not this be forgotten: the independence arising from the indulgence of the passions, is merely a rapid descent, which soon leads to the most shameful slavery. We have already said, that God will never permit so precious and holy a blessing as liberty, to issue from the miry slough of licentiousness. Ask experience: is there anything less independent than the *free woman*? George Sand herself was aware of this truth, which throws so clear a light upon the present question. What is, in fact, the life of Juliette in *Leone Leoni*? Ju-

liette is not married, she is not like Indiana, Valentine, or Mathilde, bowed beneath the yoke of Catholic prejudices and institutions. And yet, see how free and happy is that poor Juliette! She is carried off, dishonored, betrayed, abandoned, and finally sold, by that infamous Leone; indeed, I do not know a single husband portrayed by our modern literature,—which however is not very flattering to them,—that can be compared with that odious lover. Do you really believe that license improves the character of men? Do you imagine that, if in the marriage state they are selfish, avaricious, and sensual; the contempt for you with which your dishonor will inspire them will render them models of devotion and self-abnegation? The Church has failed in obliging them to love you, and will philosophy render them docile to your lightest caprice, gentle as lambs, pure as angels, and faithful unto death? The admirable good sense of Christian women, which, during the last fifty years, has preserved morality and faith among us, will never be imposed upon by such utopian ideas. Not through such dreams will you build that new city which sensuality, and not sacrifice, is to govern. Women will continue attached to that doctrine of self-devotion which has been until now, the cause of their power and greatness. They are fully aware of their sub-

jection, and of the weight of their duties, but they would blush to be delicate members under a head crowned with thorns. It is true that they must, more than once during their lives, weep bitter tears; but they know that the waters of affliction, like those of the sea, lose all their bitterness by rising towards Heaven.

CHAPTER X.

MARRIAGE AND LOVE.

THE PHILOSOPHERS HAVE DECEIVED THEMSELVES, AND THROUGH THEIR DESIRE OF DESTROYING THE ENTHUSIASM OF SELF-DEVOTION, REPRESENTED BY THE SUBLIME IMAGE OF THE CRUCIFIED, HAVE SUFFERED SHIPWRECK; THE CRUCIFIED REMAINS ERECT!—(*George Sand.*)

Having reached its ultimate consequences, the philosophy of the sentimental school passes into anarchy, and is lost in the abyss.*

* Under the head of the sentimental school, we have comprised several writers whose opinions differ on many points. The greater number have not carried their principles to their logical consequences. Some have

It is not content with calling the subordination of woman required by marriage an odious slavery, and a wretched and abject condition, but it attacks the very foundation of the institution, and the bond which consolidates it.

Love, say they, is the law of the world. By its hidden, mysterious, and divine power, do souls recognise each other, and are mutually attracted. It is love which gives to the moral universe movement, light, and life. Without its powerful and regulating influence, the world of spirit would soon return to chaos. But Providence has stamped upon all its laws a character of inviolability and sanctity, and wills that all creatures should respect them as an expression of His sovereign power, whence, no one should attempt, under pain of sacrilege, to fetter the good pleasure of the Creator, by arbitrary and

---

even fluctuated uncertain, between the morality of duty, and the theory of pleasure. The moral system of Rousseau, for example, is not the same in "Emile," that it is in the "Confessions;' very far from it In our opinion, the true logician of this school is George Sand. That vigorous mind has drawn their full consequences from the opinions of the sentimental school, and no one can accuse her of having exaggerated the principles laid down before her. More timid spirits have been arrested half way, and have shrunk back before the abyss, which has failed to intimidate the author of "Indiana."

impotent conventionalities. Now, this is precisely the objection which may be made to the moral system of the Gospel: it has misunderstood the fundamental, essential, and Providential characteristics of love,—inconstancy and liberty. It has attempted to enchain by eternal bonds the wonderful activity of woman's heart. With its icy breath, it would congeal into immobility and death, those affections which originate from God himself, and over which social institutions, be they ever so venerable, can only possess chimerical, or rather, criminal rights. It is true that women offer every day before the altars of Jesus, vows which some would render eternal; but God, more powerful than all conventions, soon looses with His sacred hands, the tyrannical bonds wherewith they would fetter the conscience. As the activity of universal life soon buries under a luxuriant vegetation the ancient palaces of ruined cities, so does human nature, by a slow and secret, but unceasing force, efface, day by day, in living and energetic minds, the old traces of Catholic habits and prejudices.

That we may not be accused of having exaggerated the opinions of George Sand, we will quote her own expressions. Jacques writes to Fernande, his betrothed, some time before his marriage: "Society will dictate to you the formula of an oath; you are

about to swear to be faithful and obedient to me, that is to say, never to love any other than myself, and to obey me in everything. One of these vows is an *absurdity*, and the other is a *meanness*. You *cannot answer for your heart*, even were I the greatest and most perfect of men; you ought not to promise to obey me, because that would be *degrading* to us both. So, my child, pronounce confidently the sacred words, without which, your mother and the world would forbid you to be mine; I too will repeat the phrases dictated to me by the priest and the magistrate, because it is at this price alone, that I can be permitted to consecrate my life to you. But to the oath of protecting you, prescribed me by the law . . . I will add another . . . that of respecting you . . . Remember Fernande, that when thou findest my heart too old *to be thy lover*, thou mayest invoke my grey hairs, and claim from me *the tenderness of a father;* if thou fearest the authority of an old man, *I will endeavor to be thy brother;* if I fail in fulfilling any of these *roles* . . . I *will depart*, and will leave thee mistress of thy actions; never shalt thou hear a complaint from my lips." At another time, Jacques writes to Sylvia, his confidante: "I have not changed my views; I am not reconciled to society, and marriage is still, in my opinion, *one of the most odious of institutions.* I do not doubt *that*

it will be abolished, when the human race shall have made some progress towards *justice* and *reason*. A bond *more human, and not less sacred*, will replace it, and some way will be found of providing for the existence of the children, which shall be born of a man and a woman, without enchaining for life, the liberty of both . . ., etc."—"*Nevertheless, there is but one thing in life, and that is love.*"—(GEORGE SAND, *Jacques.*) In *Consuelo*, the idea of the self-sacrifice and devotion of the wife, is positively condemned as immoral. The sibyl, the prophetess of the future society, speaks thus to a woman who announces her intention of remaining faithful to her husband: "*The Order* will inaugurate and sanctify love, *lost and profaned* in the world, the free choice of the heart, the holy and voluntary union of two beings equally enamored. We have over our children, the right of guiding their consciences, of forgiving their faults, of assorting their sympathies, and of breaking the chains of the ancient society. *Thou hast not then that of disposing of thy being as a sacrifice; thou canst not stifle the love within thy bosom*, . . . without our authorisation." Finally, to dissipate all scruples, the sibyl makes an appeal to the authority of God himself, and brands with the names of slavery and prostitution, all unions which are not governed by the law of love: "Wo to the children

born of such unions! they bear the *mark of disobedience . . . Be then sure that God, far from commanding such sacrifices to thy sex, rejects and forbids the right of making them. This suicide is as culpable as the renunciation of life, and still more base.* The vow of virginity is anti-human and anti-social; *but abnegation without love, is something monstrous in this sense* . . . Vanity and avarice make of the greater number of marriages, a *legal prostitution*, according to the expression of the ancient Lollards."—(George Sand, *Consuelo.)* We find the same repeated in M. Eugene Sue's most popular work, with the exception of the vigor and precision of the style: "Who, says Adrienne de Cardoville, who can ever answer for the feelings of a whole life? A God—capable of knowing the futurity of hearts, could alone *irrevocably* bind certain beings—for their own happiness; but alas! to human eyes the future is impenetrable: so that when we cannot certainly answer for the sincerity of an existing feeling, is it not an *insane, egotistical, and impious deed*, to assume indissoluble bonds?" Further on, we find this singular dilemma: "We should not accept these *indissoluble* bonds; for if we love each other, wherefore any bonds? If our love should cease, wherefore these chains, which then become only a *horrible tyranny*?" Finally, Adrienne de Cardoville dwells

upon the *imprescriptible rights* which women should oppose to the tyranny of Catholic marriage, and to what, with subtle irony, she calls *my Aunt's religion, the religion of the Mass:* "Through respect for your dignity and for mine, my friend, I will never take an oath to observe a law made, with a disdainful and brutal egotism, *by man against woman;* a law which seems to deny soul, mind, and heart to woman; a law which she cannot accept, without becoming either a slave, or forsworn: a law which, as a daughter, deprives her of her name; as a wife, declares her in a state of *incurable imbecility*, by imposing on her a most painful guardianship; as a mother, refuses to her all right and power over her children; and as a human being, subjects and enchains her forever to the good pleasure of another human being, her peer and equal, in the eyes of God."—(EUGENE SUE, *Wandering Jew.)* Such are the objections of this school of writers.

Far from having concealed the force of the objection, we have rather extended and completed it. We must now demolish this brilliant edifice, the product of imagination and fancy.

Is the heart of man truly the universal law? Is there no power in the world except that of sympathy? Should the rights of feeling exclude all others in the eyes of those who legislate for the nations?

Is it reasonable and philosophical, that the developments of this magic power of love, should be a perpetual revelation of God in the bosom of nature and humanity? We think we have demonstrated from history, philosophy, and experience, all the paradoxes which this strange theory necessarily enfolds. All that now remains for us, is, to make an application of our principles to the institution of Catholic marriage. Is the vow made by the bride before the altar absurd and null? Herein lies the whole question.

It is true, that if woman promised him to whom she gives her hand an eternal enthusiasm, a constant state of vivid and burning feeling, such as causes two souls to vibrate perpetually in unison, nothing could guarantee the performance of such a vow. But is this the true sense of the oath? Has it not a meaning at once deeper and more reasonable? Is the Church so ignorant as you deem her of the duration of human affections? No. The Gospel does not require of the woman that she should remain, during her whole life, under the influence of a fleeting passion. She would rather desire that these weighty and sacred obligations should be contracted with a certain independence of the heart. She would prefer that the union were not so much caused by the ardor of affection, as by the harmony of cha-

racter, habits, and sympathies But I will admit for the moment, that marriages should necessarily be contracted under the all-powerful influence of a real love. Is it essential that this love should last until death, to enable the woman to perform her duties as a wife and a Christian? Oh no! The diversity of dispositions, the thousand collisions of common life, the opposition of characters, the vivacity of some, and the heaviness of others, the phlegm of this one, and the impatience of that, will soon have stifled the first ardors of a youthful passion. This is, so to speak, the universal law. And can many households be found, which form an exception to this general rule?

But that which may last after love, is self-devotion, and this is, in the eyes of the Church, the meaning of that love mutually promised by the husband and the wife. In her self-devotion woman finds those wonderful secrets of strength and patience, which are so needful in enabling her to bear, even to the grave, the overwhelming burdens of her vocation as a wife and mother. We have a much better opinion of woman than our adversaries, who have never seen her crowned with the magnificent halo of sacrifice, with which the Redeemer himself, has encircled her noble brow. You fear that neglect may tire her patience. But is she not the dis-

ciple of a God, made man, who drank to the very dregs the bitter chalice of humiliation? You fear lest the restraint and sorrows of conjugal life may tire her virtue, and exhaust her courage? But does she not know, that the Son of Man had not where to lay his head? You say that she will feel continually new affections arising within her heart; that she must constantly overcome the most agreeable inclinations, and mark every moment of her severe existence with combat and struggle. Does she not know that she is a daughter of Calvary, and that the Christian must often pluck out the eye which rests with pleasure upon evil, and cut off the hand which scandalises? Do you think it is in vain that she has placed upon her heart and brow the cross, that sublime image of self-devotion? Daughters of pleasure and sensuality, go and ask of your sisters the secret of their unceasing sacrifices, and self-immolation. You say that their heroism is impossible while its glory is dazzling your very eyes. You call fidelity a dream, while it is daily working in your presence, miracles which preserve and invigorate tottering society! If you cannot comprehend the light, at least do not deny its benefits!

The picture we have just drawn is no fanciful portraiture. Open history, and read.

A man who, in the first ages, defended the Church

both by learning and by martyrdom, in recapitulating the history of the Christian wives of the primitive Church, relates, that a pagan woman converted to the Catholic faith, conceived the glorious project of withdrawing her husband from the darkness of error. She exhausted upon his inflexible heart, all the resources of love and devotion. How many ardent prayers were poured forth at the feet of the Lord to obtain his salvation! How often did she sprinkle him with her tears, to induce him to lead a better life, and abandon the worship of demons! But alas! all was in vain. Blinded by the infamous passions of paganism, that man delivered to the judge of iniquity, the tutelary angel whom God had placed near him. And the woman, who had been guilty of wis ing to gain a soul to Jesus Christ, was despoiled of her property, imprisoned, and tortured in a thousand ways. Nothing could subdue her intrepid courage; and when, in the midst of torments, she rendered her spirit into the hands of the Lord, her trembling lips murmured a last prayer for the monster who had just abandoned her to the executioners.—(See St. Justin, II *Apology*, No. 2.)

Do you fancy that since those days of heroism Christian women have lost the tradition of self-sacrifice and devotion? Do you think that they

are not now, as formerly, ready to suffer all, that the glory of God, and the honor of their vows, may be respected? They feel that they are not only wives but mothers. They wish to transmit to their children a name which may make their pride and glory in the society of men. You say that it costs them much, that they must a thousand times trample upon their hearts, in order to maintain at this height, the elevation of their characters. But if sometimes the wife be weak, if she tremble in sustaining this severe combat, if the anguish penetrate into her very soul, the mother is present to strengthen and encourage her. Is not the Christian wife aware of the heavy burden which rests upon her shoulders? Does she not know that the religion of her whole family depends upon her constancy, chastity, and courage? Is she ignorant, that in saving the family, she saves society? How then can she be weak, when she feels that she bears within her arms so glorious a treasure? Can she betray her husband, when she knows that thereby, she above all betrays her children? Can she violate her vows, when she reflects, that her faith will be rendered responsible for her fault? She will stifle in the depths of her soul all indiscreet desires, seductive fancies, foolish reveries, and vain projects of love. She will live,

no longer for herself, but for her children, for the poor, and for her God. To live thus, is it to die? Is it to extinguish the feelings of nature? Is it to trample under foot the most sacred duties? Oh no! To live thus is to pray, to suffer, and to combat! And to combat, is the destiny of all who are pilgrims of eternity, in this world of sorrows.

Besides, what can you substitute for the Christian woman, for self-devotion, and the family? Is the woman of whom you dream, O George Sand, that unfortunate, miserable, and ruined Martha, whom you have portrayed in one of your romances? Is she free? Yet, she has an unconquered nature, an independent heart, and a proud and passionate soul, which acknowledges no law but its own capricious will! Well! does this poor Martha find in all her *provisional* marriages, even a small portion of peace, security, and independence? No. She becomes, as it ever happens, the idle plaything of selfish and brutal passions. Is not her simplicity abused, and her ingenuousness imposed upon? Does she not pass from hand to hand, always more miserable and degraded? Is it thus that you would raise the dignity of woman? Would you thus elevate her in public opinion, and place on her brow the crown of royalty? Will a regenerated people bow before so

earth-stained an idol? Is this the meaning you attach to liberty, morality, and progress?*

The Christian woman does not thus understand life, duty, and virtue? A young girl, at the age of fifteen, sacrificed to the interests of her faith, the certainty of a brilliant marriage. Once wedded to the Baron de Chantal, by her father's will, she re-established the fortune of her husband. As a widow, she managed with the same dexterity, the property of her father, of her father-in law, and of

---

* Sometime before the revolution of February, the ideas of George Sand seemed to undergo considerable modifications. This great writer, after some cruel deceptions, seemed to comprehend the superiority of the law of self-devotion and sacrifice, over that which she had so often designated, as *the imprescriptible rights of love*. She appeared to understand *the enthusiasm of self-devotion, represented by the sublime image of the Crucified*. These are her own words. But we will allow the author of "Indiana" to speak for herself. She proposes to show the sublimity of the heroism of Pius IX, of that holy and glorious Pontiff, who, to restore the Papacy to its ancient splendor, and to regenerate his native Italy, so nobly exposed himself to the greatest dangers, and the most violent tempests: "How could we desire that the Pope should be a mere philosopher? And even could he entertain such an idea, what philosophy would we have him profess? What doctrine fit for a priest and the Head of the Church, have we preached and disseminated throughout the world? Can it be the worship of the reason, which our revolution

her children. While absorbed in the education of her family, she gave to the poor the entire result of her economy, and, with touching humility, nursed them in their most disgusting maladies. This woman, still young and lovely, dressed the wounds of the poor, received them in her house, fed them during scarcity, and treated them as her own children.*

By such wonders did she begin life, who was afterwards known as St. Frances de Chantal, and who, with the illustrious Bishop of Geneva, founded the Order of the Visitation.

---

has left us as the only doctrine? But this worship of the reason has borne its fruit, and reason has taught us selfishness. Individual reason teaches us to keep quiet, to let our neighbor be murdered, and only to complain when our own purses are attacked. Individual reason teaches us, that the reason of the strongest is always the best." Further on, George Sand adds: "The philosophers have believed in a collective reason, which might suffice to man for the exercise of his rights, and the practice of his duties. They are deceived in thinking that reason can dispense with the ideal, and that the interest of each well understood, would be the interest of all. They have deceived themselves; and by wishing to destroy the enthusiasm of self-devotion, represented by the sublime image of the Crucified, have suffered shipwreck; the Crucified remains erect!"—(George Sand, quoted in "le Correspondant," XXI, 457.)

* See "Letters of St. Jane Frances de Chantal." Marsolier, "Vie de Sainte J. F. de Chantal."

When only twenty-eight, a young woman of distinguished birth, found her husband an exile; her fortune was compromised and lost, and upon her fell the charge of an aged father, and of six little children. A trial for high treason menaced the life of her consort. Madame Acarie was equal to all; she saved her honor and her husband's life; she repaired her fortune, passed her nights at *l'hotel Dieu*, and at the hospital of St. Gervais, and, during the siege of Paris, deprived herself of bread, to feed the poor of the most wretched faubourgs. She, whom her age called a heroine and a saint, is named by the Church, the Blessed Mary of the Incarnation.†

Shall I speak of that illustrious Louise de Marillac who, having, after twelve years of marriage, become the widow of M. Le Gras, merited the glorious title of *the servant of the poor*? Before becoming the friend of Vincent of Paul, and founding with him the Order of the Sisters of Charity, had she not been a Christian wife, admirable for her piety and chastity? § Shall I mention Madame de Pol-

---

† See Duval, "Vie de la bienheureuse Marie de l'Incarnation." De Montis, "Vie de la B. M. de l'Incarnation."

§ See Collet, "Vie de Saint Vincent de Paul." Capefigue, "Vie de S. V. de Paul." Gobilon and Collet, "Vie de Madame Le Gras." (Louise de Marillac.)

lalion, another friend of Vincent of Paul, who instituted the Sisters of Providence, and reconducted to virtue so many poor, erring souls?|| How could I omit Madame Martin, one of the most intellectual women of her day, who went into the frozen depths of the Canadian forests, and remained until the age of seventy, engaged in the instruction of the Indian children?¶ And would not a volume be required to relate all the virtues of the celebrated Madame de Miramion, whose heart, burning with charity, would not permit her to remain unassociated with any of the good deeds of her era?**

A cotemporary writer thus recapitulates, in a few lines, all the marvels of that truly Christian life: "An orphan at the age of fourteen, a widow and a mother at sixteen, she devoted herself, under the direction of the Abbé du Festel, to every species of charitable labor, and consecrated to good works all

---

|| See Collin, "Vie de la venerable mere Marie de Lumague." Madame de Pollalion's name before her marriage, was Mademoiselle de Lumague.

¶ See "Lettres de Marie de l'Incarnation." Dom Claude Martin, "Vie de Marie de l'Incarnation." De Charlevoix, "Vie de Marie de l'Incarnation." This Marie de l'Incarnation should not be confounded with Madame Acarie. Her name before her marriage with M. Martin, was Marie Guyert.

** See De Choisy, "Vie de Madame de Miramion."

the time not required in the education of her daughter. Like Madame Le Gras (Louise de Marillac) she nursed the sick in the hospital, went on missions into the country, opened asylums, schools, houses of retreat, and contributed to the establishment for the care of foundlings. Like Madame de Pollalion (Mademoiselle de Lumague) she founded a refuge for sinful women, that of St. Pelagius. Like the Apostle of Canada (Madame Martin) she assisted, if not in person, at least with her purse, her efforts, and her vigils, in the propagation of foreign missions. Like them all, she instituted her community, that of the Holy Family, which she united with that of St. Genevieve, and of which she died a professed member and Superior.—(Dabas, in the *Universite Catholique*, second series, IV, 468)

How could I neglect to make mention of that admirable Duchess of Montmorency, who astounded the court of Louis XIII by her virtues, and filled France with her alms;* of the Princess of Conti, who, in a few years, gave more than 900,000 francs to the poor; of Madame de Saint-Pol, who kissed the ulcers of the sick; of Madame de la Petterie, who, after the death of her husband, hid her life

* See Cotolendi, 'Vie de la Duchesse de Montmorency.'

among the barbarians of the New World, in order to instruct and console their children ; and of Madame de Magnelais, who called the vermin left by the poor on her rich clothing, *her diamonds ?* *

Such is Christian woman formed by fidelity and chastity. Now, will you venture to say that Catholic morality is impossible and absurd, when it has produced such miracles, nurtured such noble hearts, and developed such elevated characters ? We have a right to say, with the author of *Valentine:* "The philosophers have deceived themselves, and through their desire of destroying the enthusiasm of self-devotion, represented by the sublime image of the Crucified, have suffered shipwreck; the Crucified remains erect!"

(THE END.)

* See Picot, 'Essai historique sur l'influence de la religion en France pendant le XVII siecle.' Jauffret, 'Vie des dames francaises les plus illustres par les services qu'elles ont rendus a la religion pendant le XVII siecle.' Rodiere, 'les Femmes Chretiennes.'

3477 6

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 013 594 148 7